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ABSTRACT

The Effective Practice (EP) schools are 26 Boston Public Schools (Massachusetts) that have demonstrated high levels of implementation of some of the essentials of whole-school improvement. In 2001-2002, these schools took on the implementation of Collaborative Coaching and Learning (CCL), a new coaching strategy for professional development. The coaching model involves teachers working in small groups with a coach over a 6-week period. Data were collected through the observation of seven CCL sessions, interviews with principals, teachers, and coaches involved in CCL at four EP schools, and interviews with the designers of CCL. Findings show that CCL was a success in its first year. The model was determined to be basically sound. Findings show that CCL requires local adaptation, and that this can be a source of strength. The participation of teachers and principals was essential to the first year success of CCL. Some improvements to the coaching plan, especially in the definition of roles and strengthening of teacher participation, are suggested. An appendix describes the CCL model. (SLD)

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Off to a Good Start:
Year I of Collaborative Coaching and Learning in the Effective Practice Schools

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July 2002

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INTRODUCTION

Looking back at the early determination and growing enthusiasm with which the Effective Practice (EP) schools took on the task of implementing Collaborative Coaching and Learning (CCL) during the 2001-2002 school year, it is clear that the first year of this new approach to coaching was a success.[1] In concluding this, we do not imply that everything ran smoothly or that every cycle of coaching was effective. Rather, we mean that the schools and their principals, in particular, saw the potential of the new coaching strategy and did their best to make the model effective in their schools. Despite some initial reservations, schools were willing to review and revise, if necessary, the professional development portion of their Whole-School Improvement Plans as well as their schedules so that they could begin implementation of CCL as early as September.

There had been intimations of a new coaching model during the 2000-2001 school year. Some BPE coaches in a few schools were pilot testing what would become CCL. But, it was not until June that the BPE sent a memo to the newly named EP schools that included the following:

> The most important finding [from what BPE learned about improving instruction over the last five years] is that for a school to accelerate and deepen the implementation of best practices across all grades, teachers must have numerous on-site opportunities to learn together. Collaborative learning enables teachers to share best practices and to inquire into their own practices to generate new learning. We will thus be working with EP schools to create a collaborative coaching structure in each school.[2]

However, the official word about the onset of CCL as the approach to school-based literacy professional development was not formally announced to all EP principals and coaches until August 23, 2001 at the EP principals' retreat.[3] At that retreat, the BPE, designer and director of the EP schools' next steps, told principals that their first responsibility as EP leaders would be to set in motion this new model of coaching with which they were, for the most part, unfamiliar, and about which their teachers would likely know nothing. This was an awkward start for the work of the BPE with a group of schools known for their strong, instructionally focused, often out-spoken principals.

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[1]The Effective Practice Schools are 26 Boston Public Schools that have demonstrated a) high levels of implementation of some of the Essentials of whole-school improvement, b) and strong principal leadership for instruction. These schools were recognized for their accomplishments in a public ceremony at the end of the 2000-2001 school year. They have in place conditions conducive to taking the step of testing a more collaborative, focused, and intense approach to coaching.

[2] BPE memo to Principals-Headmasters, Effective Practice Schools, June 28, 2001. This memo from the BPE was co-signed by Dr. Thomas Payzant, Superintendent of Schools.

[3]We refer to the coaches who work with CCL as literacy coaches although they have been called "content" coaches by the BPE. We do this to distinguish them from BPS math coaches who are also "content" coaches.

And yet, at the end of the year, no principal had refused to have CCL for an other year, no faculty had refused to participate again, and the BPE had refined the model for the 2002-2003 school year in light of thoughtful feedback from EP principals, teachers, and coaches. All seemed to agree that CCL had the potential to take schools to a higher level of whole-school improvement, a level where all teachers would be engaged in improving their literacy instruction in light of the district's focus on Readers' and Writers' Workshop, a level in which teachers would come to take responsibility for defining and addressing their own learning needs, and a level in which children would have much greater opportunities to learn and demonstrate their knowledge.

Overview of the Report. Education Matters begins this evaluation report with a review of the BPE's initial model of coaching and the ways in which the group of EP schools were selected. We then describe CCL, its design and purposes as it was conceived by staff at the BPE in collaboration with a sample of coaches, principals, and teachers. We provide an overview of the variations of CCL constructed at the schools and include an exemplar of a CCL session to provide readers with a context in which to understand our discussion of the benefits and challenges of this coaching model. Next, we identify the benefits of the coaching model as described by those participating in it during the first year and follow this section with a discussion of the challenges posed by CCL. Finally, we suggest implications for the BPE and the EP schools in moving forward with the second year of CCL.

Sources of Data for This Report. Education Matters used a number of data sources in developing this report. First, we observed seven CCL sessions and interviewed the principals, assistant principals, directors of instruction, and teachers involved in CCL at four EP schools. We interviewed the literacy and change coaches at these schools as well as coaches working with several non-sample EP schools. In addition, we attended four EP Principal Network meetings and nine EP coach debriefs/meetings which gave us a broad view of the ways in which CCL was playing out at the schools for principals, teachers, and coaches. These meetings also provided us with informal opportunities to talk with principals and coaches about CCL implementation. Finally, we interviewed all BPE staff involved with the design and implementation of CCL. We feel confident that the data we collected represents the range of experiences schools and coaches had with CCL during its first year of implementation.

WHAT IS THE CCL? WHY DID THE BPE DESIGN THIS MODEL OF COACHING?[4]

The BPE has supported on-site coaching since it began working with the first cohort of reform schools in Boston at the start of the 1996-1997 school year. During that first year, the "Cohort I" schools each had a whole-school change coach that would visit the school once a week to help the principal and teachers establish an Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), begin the process of Looking at Student Work (LASW), and identify a school wide instructional focus. In year two,

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[4] Some of this section appeared originally in Neufeld, B. *Using What We Know: Implications for Scaling-Up Implementation of the CCL Model.* Report prepared for the Coach Working Group, Boston Public Schools. January 28, 2002.

the change coaches, as they are now called, were joined by content coaches who were responsible for supporting teachers in implementing their school's literacy program. Like the change coaches, these content (or literacy) coaches also worked in schools once a week, helping individual teachers and providing small group literacy professional development.

Although teachers and principals valued the literacy coaches' work, the coaches were frustrated by the number of challenges that limited their ability to have as significant an impact as they would have liked. Some of the challenges were associated with the organization of the role, namely the one-day-per week, one-teacher-at-a-time model. Coaches who worked with a few teachers for an extended period of time wondered whether they were making sufficient impact school wide. They wondered how to balance the depth versus breadth issues of implementing the literacy strategies. Too often, coaches could not find time to debrief with one or more teachers after a demonstration lesson or observation. Thus, this important step in the coaching process was often omitted. Coaches who worked with very weak teachers or with teachers who had serious classroom management problems wondered whether this was a good use of their time. They were unsure of how to set priorities and focus their efforts for maximum impact. Other challenges were connected with the fact that coaches could work only with those teachers who wanted their help. Teachers who resisted the coach's offers of support for whatever reason, were off limits. These and other challenges left coaches, many principals, and the BPE feeling that the impact of literacy coaches was too limited.

Thus, beginning in the 2000-2001 school year, the BPE decided to redesign its coaching model to better support the goals of whole-school improvement. The BPE had learned from Education Matters' Taking Stock Report (July 2000) and from its own school visits that the collaborative activities engendered by the ILT and LASW groups were effective in weakening schools' cultures of isolation and creating collaborative cultures in their place. The BPE also learned, again from Education Matters' evaluation reports as well as their own school-site observations and discussions, that the once-a-week model of coaching was inefficient and often ineffective. Coaching, as it had been designed and implemented, was not contributing to teacher collaborative learning. And finally, the BPE learned that to better align its approach to coaching with that of the district, it would need to consider the components of the district's newly defined coaching model: a) *classroom experience* - using the classroom as a laboratory for adult learning; b) *reflection and inquiry* - engaging in reflection and inquiry related to practice with the teacher; c) *feedback* - providing the teacher with feedback she can use to refine her instruction; and d) *theory and content knowledge* - helping the teacher to deepen her understanding of theory and knowledge of content.[5] The CCL grew out of the BPE's continuous learning and was designed to remedy the problems of the existing coaching model.

The BPE states in its description of the CCL model, "The aim of Collaborative Teaching and Learning (CCL) is just that - to reduce isolation and to encourage a culture in which teachers visit each other's classrooms to observe, participate in, and share best practices." With its

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[5]Boston Public Schools and Boston Plan for Excellence (2001). Coaching Resource Binder, 2001-2002.

collaborative design and literacy focus, during the 2001-2002 school year, CCL would support schools in deepening teachers' knowledge and use of Readers' and Writers' Workshop. To accomplish this, coaches were assigned to schools two days each week for six weeks at a time to work with a set of teachers. Each six-week period was called a "cycle." Each CCL cycle included the following components designed to support collaborative learning focused on Readers' and Writers' Workshop:

1. demonstration of key teaching points done in the teachers' own classrooms – the lab sites;
2. reading of professional literature tied to implementation of Readers' and Writers' Workshop;
3. engagement with colleagues in inquiry groups around the professional reading;
4. use of observation, practice, and reflection to improve instruction. (Adapted from BPE document on CCL, SY2001-2002, attached as Appendix A)

Using the schools' WSIP as a guide and the ILT as the forum for discussion, the literacy and change coaches, in collaboration with the principal and ILT, were to organize the CCL cycle – which grades/teachers to include and how to focus the content of the work – and support its implementation. Teachers participating in the cycle would further refine the cycle's focus in light of their specific instructional learning needs. This process was designed to increase teachers' buy-in and growing capacity to identify their own professional development needs and shape their professional development.

During a cycle, CCL lab site sessions would have a distinct format that focused on demonstrations of teaching practices tied to Readers' and Writers' Workshop. Each session would begin with a pre-conference in which the coach would review the focus of the demonstration teaching that was scheduled to take place during the lab site. The lab site group would then move to a classroom where the coach and/or one or more of the teachers would demonstrate an instructional strategy. While watching, teachers would take notes on what they saw happening in the classroom. After the demonstration, teachers, the principal, and the coach would reconvene to debrief what they had seen. At that time they might make plans for the next teaching demonstration. Teachers would also meet in inquiry groups to discuss the professional reading that, ideally, was linked to the cycle's course of study. In this way, a group of teachers and the coach, with principal participation, worked together in a focused way over a six week period. At the end of the six week cycle, the coach and teachers would develop a plan for teachers to follow during the off-cycle period. The ILT would do non-evaluative walkthroughs of the school several times during the year to observe classrooms and consider the status of implementation of Readers' and Writers' Workshop. With this process, coaching would become more integrated into the whole-school improvement effort and the ILT would have a pivotal role in shaping it, assessing its impact and suggesting next steps.[6]

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[6]Although walkthroughs were part of the CCL design, few ILTs did this component of the model during the first year of implementation.

Effective Practice Schools and Whole-School Improvement: The Context for Implementing CCL. CCL was implemented in 26 schools that had "realized the power of the interconnectedness of the Essentials and had done deep and thoughtful work on weaving them into the fabric of the whole school." Their "principals-headmasters and teachers know that the changes they have made in instruction, organization, and school culture are beginning to raise achievement; they also understand that they are not finished – that, in fact, this is now a "continuous improvement" effort."[7] In recognition of their achievements, these schools were named Effective Practice Schools. In offering congratulations to the principals-headmasters and the members of the ILTs for their accomplishments, the superintendent noted that these schools were "marked by strong leadership on the part of the principal and teachers, a school wide willingness to assume responsibility for each student, and a collaborative culture that supports you in getting better."[8] These schools had established conditions likely to be conducive to taking the step of testing a more collaborative, focused, and intense approach to coaching.

CCL in Practice: Variations on the Model. CCL in practice, of necessity, became variations on the model outlined by BPE. At the outset, no one knew just how CCL might need to be adapted to function in different school contexts and school organizations. Principals and coaches were unsure how much adaptation of the model was acceptable, but they knew that implementation required attention to context and, therefore, some adaptation.[9] As one EP principal put it,

> *If you take what they want you to do in CCL literally, if you do it exactly the way they tell you to do it without paying attention to your school, you're either going to implement something that's ineffective or do a very weak implementation or do no implementation.* Principal D[10]

For example, it was clear to principals at the August 23rd retreat that there was not enough time for ILT input prior to the first CCL cycle in September. (Most principals who would participate in the first cycle, learned this at the retreat.) They and their colleagues spent time that day and in the days before school opened working with BPE staff and coaches to develop a compelling presentation of CCL that would inform their teachers about the model, describe what their

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[7]Quotes taken from "Effective Practice Schools" in the BPE Board Book for the Meeting of the Board of Trustees, October 1, 2001.

[8]May 17, 2001 letter from Tom Payzant to the Effective Practice Schools.

[9]Although the BPE was explicit about the overall design of CCL and told EP schools they were to implement it as designed, the 2001-2002 school year was, in fact, a pilot test of the model. The BPE did not know enough about how the model might interact with different school contexts to provide guidance to the schools. In fact, the BPE needed feedback from the coaches and the schools in order to learn about variations that would better support implementation of the model and help it achieve its goals.

[10]To preserve confidentiality, throughout this report we attach code name to all quotes and refer to all principals, teachers, and coaches as "she."

participation might look like, and leave them with a positive feeling. Principals knew that they had to make a strong case for the model and that the first cycle had to be successful if the second cycle was ever to occur. EP principals worked toward this goal of a successful first cycle because a) they felt that the CCL model had merit, b) they were strong instructional leaders who could competently explain the model as well as coax teachers into the accompanying schedule changes for professional development, and c) they were willing to set aside the fact that they had no choice in the matter for what they saw as a good idea. Fortunately, as one principal notes, the faith that the EP principals had in the BPE and CCL turned out to be well-placed.

> *The good thing is that CCL is more powerful than I thought it would be. I wasn't quite sure. When we had to do the first cycle, I almost wept. I said, "Oh, come on!" I wasn't anticipating starting until October. Give us a month to settle in. But I was glad it happened, because teachers now come to me and say, "You know, when you came back in August and told us we had to do this!" Even the ILT was rolling their eyes and going, "Oh my gosh, what is she making us do now?" And now they say they're glad, because it started the year off right for them. They felt like they gained so much. It put things in place. So that was great.* Principal B

With the importance of early success in mind, and with the BPE design as a template for implementation, schools customized the CCL according to teachers' needs and the demands of the schedule. What kinds of variations did this customization lead to? First, principals rather than ILTs, for the most part, selected teachers for the first cycle with an eye toward creating groups amenable to the kind of work involved in the lab site. In fact, throughout the year, few ILTs had a role in selecting the focus or participants for the lab sites.

Second, principals differed in how and whether they participated in the lab sites. Some attended every lab site session; others attended few. They varied their participation as a function of the time they had available for this work given other priorities and as a function of the extent to which they thought their presence would help or hinder the teachers' learning opportunities. Some principals worried, for example, that their presence would lead teachers to resist talking about their problems teaching in the workshop manner.

Third, lab sites varied in their composition. Very small schools might have multi-grade lab site teams but so might large schools if the principal had reasons for creating a group of teachers who might learn well together. One principal might want to group experienced teachers with some who were less experienced. Others might want to put a resistant teacher in with a group of highly competent and respected teachers to increase the likelihood of reducing her resistance. As principals and teachers learned from their first CCL cycles, they made changes in the composition of the teacher groups for subsequent cycles.

Fourth, lab sites varied in the role given to the host teacher's classroom. In some lab sites, only the coach and host teacher demonstrated. In others, all teachers demonstrated at some point in the cycle. Still other lab sites operated without a host teacher classroom. In these schools/lab

sites, teachers wanted the opportunity to demonstrate with their own students, something they could not do if they practiced only in the host teacher's classroom. To accomplish this purpose, demonstration lessons would rotate from one classroom to the next.

Fifth, schools varied in the number of teachers involved in the lab site over the course of the year. Some schools tried to engage most if not all of their teachers; others concentrated lab site professional development on a small number of teachers while literacy coordinators, transition specialists, and other lead teachers for example, supported the non-lab site teachers.

Education Matters' analysis reveals that some variations worked well and were continued; others did not and were dropped. Some variations were temporary and a function of the short time frame for the initial implementation; others became integral to the CCL model as implemented at the school. In all cases, it was necessary for principals and their teachers to make adaptations in the formal design of CCL if it was to succeed in their schools' settings.

A Lab Site In Action. We turn next to an example of a lab site to provide readers with an image that can be used to consider the variations in implementation as well as the benefits and challenges of the work that teachers and coaches took on in the last school year. The lab site described functioned well according to its coach, teachers, and principals. Having observed it, we concur. And, in doing so we note that what makes this an example of a well-functioning lab site is that a) all of the CCL components were implemented – there was a pre-conference, lab site session, and debrief, b) teachers demonstrated, observed, and reflected on their practice, c) the coach made suggestions during all components of the lab site session, and d) the teachers considered what they would like to work on next as professional development. Lab sites are opportunities for teachers to learn in collaboration with one another and with the coach. The teaching need not yet be expert; the reflection might not be as deep as it will be in the future; teachers may be reluctant to tackle difficult issues when they see weak teaching. But, for the first year of CCL, the fact that teachers were taking part in all of the components willingly, in fact eagerly, also marks this lab site as well-functioning.

We have chosen to describe a fourth-grade lab site that had a heterogeneous configuration that included teachers from three grade-levels and bi-lingual and mono-lingual classrooms. Teachers had a range of teaching experience and varied knowledge of Readers' and Writers' Workshop. The principal had urged a few of these teachers to participate; others were participating by choice. Some teachers, including the one hosting the lab site, had participated in a lab site earlier in the year. For others, this was their first lab site experience. The classroom component of the lab site included a mini-lesson, two conferences, a small guided reading session, and a "share" time.[11]

According to the coach, the lab site upon which this narrative is based was typical for this group of teachers. The teachers were willing to demonstrate teaching strategies in front of each other

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[11]We include the mini-lesson, one conference, and the guided reading lesson in this narrative in order to give an overview of the lab site without creating too extensive a narrative.

and with the host teacher's children. They prepared for the sessions and participated in the debriefs. For the most part, teachers appreciated the opportunity to learn across grades and felt they could adapt what they saw and learned for their own grade level. The students in the host-classroom listened well and paid close attention to lessons regardless of who was teaching them. Still, even with these positive conditions, teachers were sensitive to the fact that they were putting themselves at risk by teaching in public. No one wanted to get "slammed" or slam a colleague. This resulted in teachers being unwilling to criticize each other, even gently. For example, in the description that follows, all teachers agreed, one-on-one, that the guided reading lesson was poor. But no one brought up problems with the lesson in the debrief. The coach reported that she walked a fine line between being positive and raising areas for improvement. If she were perceived as too critical, she feared that teachers would lose trust in the process and resist demonstrating in front of her and their teacher colleagues.

Pre-Conference. The purpose of the pre-conference is to set the stage for the observations to follow. Teachers gather together to hear the host teacher review what was happening in her classroom. In this pre-conference, the host teacher reported that her students had been "buzzing" successfully with their partners – talking about their books. She noted that while many of her students read, she was not sure that they comprehended well. In light of this concern, the focus for today's lab site would be comprehension. The teaching strategies would be linked to a chapter in *Guided Reading* by Fountas and Pinnell called, "What Do We Do When Reading Doesn't Make Sense?" A non-host teacher would begin the lab site by doing a mini-lesson to review comprehension strategies. The coach asked her how she was feeling about doing the mini-lesson and the teacher said she was a little bit nervous. She told the group that her lesson would require students to articulate the strategies they use when they get stuck with understanding a given text. She wasn't sure they would be able to do this and the coach said that she would step in, if needed.

Next, the coach asked another non-host teacher how she felt about leading the guided reading group. This teacher reported having had difficulty deciding on a focus. She had chosen vocabulary and her purpose would be to see if students skip over words they do not know or if they try different comprehension strategies. (This lesson was intended to link with the comprehension focus of the mini-lesson.) At this teacher's request, the group had a brief discussion about whether the teacher should identify the vocabulary words ahead of time or let students identify them from the text. The teacher decided that she would give students the words in advance. Now, teachers moved on to the host classroom where some would demonstrate while others observed. The teaching and observing would form the basis for further discussions about improving/refining the workshop strategies.

Mini-Lesson: The mini-lesson lasted just under five minutes and focused on "things that readers do when they get stuck/confused." Children gathered on the corner rug and paid very close attention to the teacher's instructions. When she asked them to talk about the strategies they use when encountering a difficult text, several volunteered. Another teacher made a list of the suggestions so that they would be available to the students. The teacher leading the mini-lesson reminded them to use the strategies during independent reading. She also asked them to be on the lookout for new strategies. The children dispersed and a number of the teachers chatted briefly about the children's responses. The teacher leading the mini-lesson thought that the students had all given the same answer. The teacher who made the list told her not to worry; there was some

variation although both agreed that re-reading the text seemed to be the most popular strategy. The coach came over and suggested they continue the conversation in the debrief and move now to the conferencing.

Conference: At the suggestion of the coach, the host teacher selected the students for the conference. A teacher volunteered to do the first conference with a boy who was reading a non-fiction book about World War II. The original purpose of the conference was to check-in and see how he liked the book, but the student reported that it was "kind of a hard book" with parts that he did not understand. The teacher asked the student to show her a part of the book that was confusing. After she scanned the page that he selected, the teacher asked him to tell her what was "hard" about the excerpt. He could not tell her. The teacher then asked if he was having trouble with the names. The student sat up alertly and said that there were too many people to remember. The teacher asked if he had been using his post-its to keep track of them. He said, "no." She recommended making a post-it for each character so that he could refer back to them whenever he got confused. She also suggested that he try 'buzzing' about it with a partner. (There are several other boys in the class who are reading the same book.) The student seemed pleased and surprised that he would be allowed to "buzz" about his confusion. The conference ended.

Guided Reading: The coach suggested moving on to the guided reading lesson. The teacher gathered a small group of students together, passed out the books, and told the students which pages to read. She asked them to focus on a list of vocabulary words she had selected. While the students read, the teacher asked each student in turn to read aloud a paragraph or page so that she could check their comprehension. Going from student to student was taking a long time and the coach asked the teacher to turn back to the whole guided reading group prior to finishing. The coach also asked the teacher to review some of the conversations she had with the individual students because it had been difficult to hear them. The teacher reported to her colleagues that some students were having trouble with the words and were going back to re-read and look for context clues. Some were using that strategy on their own, others had to be reminded.

The teacher then addressed the guided reading group and asked for definitions of the words: syrupy, neon and turnipy. One of the girl knew the word "neon" from her highlighter markers. But everyone was confused by the word "turnipy." No one had ever seen, eaten, or heard of a turnip. As a result, referring back to the sentence - "the woman's face was turnipy and bulging at the cheeks" - did not help. The teacher kept returning to the sentence, however, and eventually determined that students did not know what "bulging" meant either. She told them that they should have marked that word. The students were more and more hesitant in responding. Finally, the teacher defined "turnipy" while another teacher did a quick sketch to show the students that turnips are heart-shaped and that the sentence was referring to the woman's heart-shaped face. This visual demonstration seemed to help.

To wrap up her guided reading lesson the teacher asked the students to talk about the story, but the students could not do this. The teacher asked more focused questions: Is the main character in school or on vacation? How do you know this? But still, the students struggled. The coach stepped in to ask them if they were making a clear movie in their minds. Or, she asked, was the movie still fuzzy? Fuzzy! This was the first answer on which all the students agreed. The coach told them that it was okay, that they had only read a few pages. The teacher then suggested that the students go on and read the next chapter. But the coach stepped in again and suggested that

the students re-read chapter one before moving on. "That way," she told them, "the meaning won't be so fuzzy."[12]

The Debrief. The debrief began with the coach asking for someone to talk about the mini-lesson and the conference. The teacher who taught the mini-lesson thought it went well, but that it was clear from the students' responses that they did not have a repertoire of "sense-making" reading strategies. She heard five different ways of saying 're-read,' but not much else. She had not known whether to introduce a different strategy to the students during the mini-lesson. Another teacher said that she had heard some variation in the students' responses: some students talked about re-reading the word but others talked about moving on and trying to get a broader understanding of the passage. The coach asked the host teacher to comment on how the lesson went in light of her knowledge of the students. She replied that her students *used* a range of reading strategies, but could not articulate them clearly. Another teacher said that she has found when teaching younger students that they have a hard time *talking* about the strategies they use, even if they use those strategies very well. As a next step, she said, she would show a reading passage on an overhead and walk the students through the strategies. The host teacher liked the idea and said she would try it before the next lab site. The coach said that she thought the teacher did a good job with the mini-lesson even though it lasted only three minutes. There was no point, she said, to continue it longer since the students could not articulate more strategies. And, said the coach, if the teacher had introduced another strategy she would have been doing a whole other mini-lesson. Finally, the coach noted that the students in the host teacher's class were able to carry over the focus of the mini-lesson into their independent work.

The coach then talked about the conference with the boy reading the non-fiction book, noting that boy had done a great job of expressing the problem he was having and that the teacher had included all of the important components of the conference: research (find out the student's problem), decide, teach. The teacher who led the conference said that at first she was worried because she wasn't able to tie the conference directly back to the mini-lesson. The host teacher interrupted saying, "You figured out what he needed." A third teacher went on to say that her first instinct might have been to say that the book was too hard for him, but then she remembered that it is important for kids to be able to read passages and understand that they don't have to catch every single name, every single detail. She remarked that adult readers don't catch every word. She suggested that this topic might be a good thing to visit in a mini-lesson around non-fiction texts. The host teacher had a lot of boys reading the same non-fiction books and said that she would try it.

The coach now asked the teacher who led the guided reading lesson to talk about how it went. In addition to noting that there was not enough time, the teacher reflects that, in hindsight, she should have let students find the words on their own since she had failed to identify all of the words that stumped them. She also commented that they were not comprehending the story. No one else commented at this point, and the coach told the teacher to remember that she was not teaching to that particular book, but to all books. For that reason, the strategy was more important than the individual vocabulary words. The host teacher said that she actually liked the fact that the students had the words ahead of time, but they would definitely need to read through

[12]While the teachers watched the small group guided reading lesson, the other students in the room were engaged in independent reading. They worked quietly and appeared diligent throughout the period.

the chapter again. The coach agreed. The host teacher said that perhaps they did not understand the text because they did not have time to finish reading.

With about five minutes left, the coach asked teachers what they wanted to do for their next and last lab site. She asked them if they had any big questions outstanding and wondered whether they were ready to look at literacy circles or book clubs. One teacher responded that it was too soon and cited the research literature which said that these strategies should be introduced after the workshop is well-established. This teacher wanted to know how one would tackle a more general genre-study. The coach said they could talk about that in the next debrief, but that would be too much to handle in a single lab site. Then she continued: "What is still missing? What pieces do you need so that you can put this in place next year?" One teacher asked about the reading response journal and how to tie it in. There was further discussion and final agreement that the teachers would like to see a mini-lesson demonstrating some of the comprehension strategies the students talked about in today's lesson. They also agreed that they might like to have some focus on reading non-fiction. The coach said she would check in with the host teacher during the week to determine what they could work on for next week.

What does this lab site exemplar show? First, teachers were actively engaged in the work of the pre-conference, the lab site, and the debrief. The pre-conference set the stage for teaching and observing in the lab site by reminding teachers that comprehension strategies were the focus for the day. The coach briefly assured the teachers doing the mini-lesson and the guided reading lesson that she would be there to help them if needed. Teachers' conversation in the pre-conference was about the instructional topics at hand.

Second, the exemplar provides readers of this report with descriptions of how teachers take on the work of practice teaching – their professional development – in front of colleagues. Two of the teachers had the opportunity to prepare their lessons prior to the lab site; one teacher was asked to lead a conference on-the-spot. All teachers had to attend to what they saw and thought about it in light of what they were learning about the strategies from their own teaching and their professional reading. The lab site organization of teacher professional development demonstrates a) the developing collaborative, professional culture around instruction that exists within the lab site group, and b) a genuine and remarkable departure from the traditional cultures of schools, teaching, and professional development.

Third, the exemplar shows the important role the coach plays in the smooth running of all components of the lab site. During the pre-conference, the coach checked in with each of the teachers who had planned a lesson and assured them she would be available to assist them if they needed assistance. During the classroom component, the coach made suggestions about timing when the guided reading lesson was going on for too long, and about the use of a reading strategies, for example, when she suggested to students that they re-read the first chapter to increase their comprehension before continuing. And, during the debrief, the coach facilitated the teachers' conversation and then responded to the teacher's question about whether she should have taught a comprehension strategy when the students could not articulate them. The coach gave a direct answer, explaining why it had been a good idea not to introduce a new strategy into the mini-lesson. The coach, along with the teachers, tiptoed around the discussion of the guided

reading lesson, demonstrating what the coach calls the "thin line" she walks in trying to give constructive feedback while not sounding negative or too critical. And, finally, the coach asked the teachers to reflect on what they wanted to address in the next lab site session.

Not all of the lab sites Education Matters observed ran as well as the one described above. Some had pre-conferences in which the demonstrating teacher was unsure of the purpose of her lesson. This made it difficult for the coach and the observing teachers to focus their attention during the observation and debrief. Some had teachers who were resistant – they attended but did not contribute to the conversation. This also posed challenges to the coach. A few lab sites had full principal participation; others, like the exemplar, did not. And some lab sites ran as well as the one described with teachers who were as engaged as the ones described in this exemplar. Not surprisingly, teachers who were most involved and engaged with the work of the lab sites were most able to articulate the benefits they accrued from the experience. We turn next to a discussion of those benefits prior to presenting the challenges posed by the CCL model of teacher professional development.

BENEFITS OF CCL

Teachers in all seven of the lab sites we observed could identify significant advantages of the CCL model.[13] They noted that the model required them to be targeted, to define a focus for their learning and a strategy for getting there. The focus, combined with professional reading, the lab site work, and the support of the coach created intentional professional reflections on teaching. Teachers reported having richer conversations in their lab site groups than they had ever had with one another or in one-on-one conversations with coaches. The cycles were described as "intense," and yet teachers with all levels of experience and with more and less familiarity and comfort with Readers' and Writers' Workshop found it valuable as the following teachers' comments demonstrate.[14]

> *I am the novice [with four years of experience] and it is wonderful to have [the coach who] had a lot of valuable information and opinions, and thoughts. It was like having a mentor teacher. ...It was the beginning of the year and I was actually excited because last year we didn't have a ton of training for the reading and I felt like, well, this will be great. She will be right in there with me, right on the battlefield. She helped me get things in order right away, which is perfect in the beginning of the year. I was glad to have her. I am no longer the host*

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[13]Not all of the teachers in our sample had positive lab site experiences. Those who were not satisfied with the overall CCL experience, however, still valued the collaborative aspect of the model and the potential for improved professional development. Their comments are not represented in this section on benefits. They inform the "Challenges" section of this report.

[14]In the "Challenges" section of this report we note issues raised by teachers who, regardless of their knowledge of it, do not want to teach the workshop model.

teacher... I actually asked if I could do it [be the host teacher] again. I said, "I'll do it again." I really did like it. Teacher G

As a teacher, watching guided reading, watching small whole-group instruction, watching some strategies to teach the kids. I just think [the benefits are] endless. So as much as I think I'm an experienced teacher, no matter. If you see it in a different environment, it's different, and you need to see it that way. Teacher A

Let me just tell you something about the CCL. I enjoyed it very much. These are new methods for me are very new methods because I'm a traditional teacher. But we have a wonderful coach. I enjoyed working with her and I learned a lot. Teacher B

In addition to the value of the lab site design, teachers valued the fact that the coach was on-site more of the time and able to assist teachers in their own rooms as well as in the lab sites.

I think it is very valuable as far as it guided me quite a bit in what I was doing with the Reading and the Writing Workshop and it was a big support as far as if I had questions, or I wasn't sure about what I was doing, if I was doing it correctly, she was always there, and readily available if you needed anything, or if you had questions. I think it is just a big support for your classroom. As far as just somebody telling you, telling you to read something and do what it says in the book, but actually doing it, showing you how it should be done and modeling for you, just like the kids, we need that, too. We need that model. So, it was very supportive. Teacher C

I like the way it's set up this year. It's more cohesive in the sense that the coaches spend cycles with you, and it's set up differently so that you get to be a learner and an observer at the same time. And a practitioner all in one. Teacher D

Although teachers who participated in lab sites realized that they had not learned all that they needed to know about teaching with the workshop model, at the end of the first year of CCL most reported being more comfortable with the model and having more confidence in their ability to use it as a strong instructional strategy.

Because the 2001-2002 school year was the first year for CCL as the main approach to literacy professional development among EP schools, in our view it is most important that teachers and principals finished the year talking about CCL as an exemplary opportunity for teachers to learn and become more collaborative around improving instruction. We have grouped their comments about the benefits of CCL as professional development into two categories: 1. the learning opportunities provided by observing and teaching the workshop model; and 2. the contribution to teacher learning provided by collaboration. Teachers' comments about these two benefits of

the model also reveal the fact that their professional development work is now more focused and that the coach is providing them with more targeted assistance around that focus.

Observing and Teaching as Professional Development. As we described in the exemplar, CCL provided teachers with the opportunity to practice in front of their colleagues as well as observe their colleagues' practice. With some exceptions, teachers valued the opportunity to observe the coach as well as their colleagues teaching.[15]

> *Overall I think I'm definitely benefitting from them because I get to see it – not just because I'm in a lab site, but I see [teaching] in the classroom, rather than just talking about the theory, the structure, the frameworks of things, I'm actually seeing it in action. And because [the coach]offers to come in during off days to meet with you, to see how it's going in your class, to give you individual feedback for your own individual class, I think it's very helpful. And the days that we meet on our own in the mornings without the coach there to discuss the literature – kind of really holds me accountable to doing the reading.* Teacher E

> *Last year, there were a lot of questions, and I didn't feel I ever got any type of an answer. We didn't have the lab sites. Maybe that's what the problem was. We didn't actually go in and see it being done. And this year we would go over things. We would see it being done, and then we would talk about it again and go on from there. It was a big difference. I'd definitely say I've learned a lot this year.* Teacher F

> *I think the live interaction with students [makes a difference]. ... I just found it so much more valuable than what we have done in the past, where we meet in our grade level meetings, but have no meat to discuss, if that makes sense...You know, the real live, someone in the classroom. It was very valuable when I was the host teacher because I sat there with someone else dealing with my children and seeing what she did, and I got a lot of really great ideas. We have different teaching styles, but I could incorporate some of her techniques.* Teacher G

> *It was nice to see other people teach too, see the way they teach your class. There are always those kids that are a little tricky for you, and it's nice to see how other people handle it. It is nice to see how other people model lessons and the things they point out... There's a teacher who came in to do some one-on-one conferencing with one of my kids who was reading independently, and she wanted to see what was going on. And the way she talked to the kid it was like she was just having a conversation with him. It didn't seem like a teacher firing questions like it usually is. It was like she just was wondering what they were reading about. And out of that more informal kind of discussion, they were able to talk*

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[15] In a few lab sites the demonstrations were of poor teaching quality. Observing teachers did not value spending their time in this way. We discuss this issue further in the section on challenges.

much more freely. ...the way she took that little bit of information in that book and just carried the little girl to another kind of thought she had in her mind, based on that book. It was nice to see the way she interacted with one of my kids in such a personal, informal kind of way... I took that [approach] and tried to talk to them in that sort of way, not like I'm firing questions. Teacher I

The best part was that we were allowed to go in and work with students and with other teachers. It wasn't just someone at the front of a room telling you how this lesson should go; we got to do it. And all the teachers were in the same boat. It's new for all of us, so that way you don't feel so embarrassed This was the best way of learning. I had six weeks of Writer's Workshop cycle and I was really into it and really learning. It was a great experience, working with the children. And, each of the teachers had to get up and do something. It was a nice group of teachers....Well, I didn't know how to do guided reading. But everyone was in the same boat. There are a lot of things going on at once. But we each got to practice with this class, and then we'd spent 15-20 minutes going over what was right, what was wrong - and the coach would help us. What was great was that the coach was right there. After the lab site lesson, she would come into your classroom and help. She'd watch what you were doing and point out what was good and what could be better. Teacher B

Teaching in front of the coach and colleagues was a hurdle for most teachers. Initially, coaches had to nudge, prod, and assign teachers to this role. In the long run, however, no one we talked to said they regretted doing a demonstration lesson. Many teachers seemed proud that they had survived the experience and said that they would be willing to try it again. They valued the coach and colleague feedback they had received.

At first I wasn't sure how I would like it, but then once you get past that people are watching you, it's helpful because you have all those people to give you some kind of feedback or to ask you questions about why you chose to do something this way. I think that was where the most discussion came from, like after someone modeled the lesson, it was easier to talk about how the kids were reacting or what you would do to make things go more smoothly. So I think that was a big part of the cycle that worked pretty well. Teacher I

I guess we were all put on the spot and told, "It's your turn to demonstrate." The first time we did it we were all a little bit nervous because we were never watched by our peers. The second time it got better and everybody was very supportive. We have a great team of teachers, and because of the school, most people have known each other for a long time, so in the debriefing everybody was very positive. It was the same thing we were encouraging the children to do – only say the positive things so that you feel good and more confident to go on. The team atmosphere was very supportive and we didn't feel like," Oh, did I do it right," or "Did I do it wrong," and that was important. Teacher J

It felt a little awkward because you didn't really know the children. But at the same time, it was nice because you got feedback after, [suggestions for] what you could have tried or what you did that was helpful. Teacher K

Professional development that involved observing and teaching as it was done in the lab sites was a considerable departure from teachers' past experiences. Although it was daunting at times to participate in the lab sites, teachers reported that they were grateful for the opportunity to engage in this learning opportunity. First, the lab sites involved authentic work, concrete activities done in classrooms, in the places where teachers work. Second, the coach was on-site with the teachers to observe the same teaching and offer feedback in the form of questions and/or comments. Third, as a result of observing, teaching and getting feedback, teachers learned workshop strategies that they could try in their own classrooms. The lab sites were the places where all of the reading – the theory as teachers often called it – was turned into practices. And it is practices that teachers want to learn and improve.

[CCL] made it so much clearer to me that you can have a zillion study groups and you can do as many presentations as possible, explain to the teachers what it should look like, but they need to see it, and they need to see it in a way that's personal and built-in. It's not once every month. It's twice a week, six weeks. I see a shift in my teachers,... I see people who have moved more in this past year than they moved in five years prior to this, in just that one six week cycle. And again, I'm putting the responsibility on two things: the coach, who has incredible people skills and knowledgeable background in literacy, and also in the [CCL] model, the way the model's set up. One without the other wouldn't have been successful. Principal A

Learning in a Collaborative Manner. As a result of implementing CCL, teachers reported that they collaborated more often around instructional issues and that the collaborations helped them improve their practice. Collaboration in the CCL model enabled teachers to recognize difficulties they and their colleagues were having and to learn from one another with the support of the coach. Teachers' comments about learning from observing and teaching (above) suggest the collaborative aspect of their work. These next comments speak directly to the issue of collaboration and communication around instruction.

We're more open with each other. We talk more about what's going on in our classrooms. We share more about what we're doing. [For example], "Okay, this book worked for me, but this book didn't." A lot more communication. I think it's something we always wanted. We wanted to be able to communicate more, but there was never time. I still don't think it's enough time, but it's a little more than it was before. Teacher F

Because we're meeting as a group, the teachers become more collegial when we're having team meetings. Because [of CCL] we're doing the same thing, we're more or less on the same page. There's a lot more educational exchange:

"What are you doing? Can you help me with this? What do you do when this happens?" Teachers' meetings become more meaningful because we're sharing and learning from one another. Teacher J

This is the second lab site that I've had with [these] teachers. I feel like we're working more like a team right now. And even with those teachers who aren't at my grade level, who may be doing something at a different level, but on the same topics that I need to be doing in my class, I find myself going down there, seeing what they're doing, looking at their student sample work or their lesson plans. Teacher E

Collaboration is the most important thing to me. So many teachers have so many great ideas and you don't get a chance to, there is no time in the day. No one is going to take out the time and say, "Hey, why don't you come in here and let me teach you this because this is a great workshop or a great unit." You basically have to do it on your own time and this [CCL] was a great time to show what you know and learn what you don't know from teachers who are more experienced than you are. Teacher L

It is also important to note that CCL provided opportunities for special education teachers, sometimes for the first time, to collaborate and learn with their mainstream teacher colleagues. The special education teachers with whom we spoke valued their participation in the lab sites and their opportunities to learn to implement the workshop strategies.

As a resource room teacher, lots of times you don't get the training that the regular classroom teachers do. And it is nice to be included as part of that group. It's a give and take. We both learn from each other. CCL gave it more of a focus and a way to go so that special education would be somewhat on the same page as the regular class teachers, which is something that I've felt that we've had to do all along. And it's difficult to do it. Schedule-wise, we don't have time to sit and talk with folks. And [yet] they have the same kids we do at different times of the day! And so it really is helpful. This gives you a chance to coordinate things better and the time to do it,. Teacher R

Many of the special education teachers in our sample participated in the full range of CCL activities. Special education teachers who hosted a lab site noted that hosting the demonstration lessons required some adaptations of the workshop mode. But, these teachers were pleased with the results of their adaptations and with their students' response to having extra adults in the room. They said that participating in CCL helped them integrate the teaching and learning of special education and mainstream students.[16]

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[16]Bilingual teachers also participated in lab sites and often remarked about the value of learning with their monolingual colleagues. However, we also heard of a number of challenges associated with supporting bilingual teachers and discuss those in the "Challenges" section of this report.

Teachers reported that collaborating in CCL has led them to interact more often around instruction even when they are not engaged in lab site work. These next two teachers who work in the same school attest to the value of the collaboration engendered by CCL for nurturing and sustaining the instructionally focused conversations that are so important to Boston's school improvement effort.

> *The added benefit is, [another teacher] gave out a packet and told us the lesson she had done that day. I started it the next day and by that afternoon we were sitting at lunch discussing pitfalls and suggestions and refinements of how we got this to work. This is a continuing thing.* Teacher M

> *I bumped into [a teacher] in the hall and I said something [about my teaching]. She said, "Yes, this came up in my class." And we quickly discussed it and we will discuss it in our next cycle. That was a cause for me to converse with her. She is sixth grade; I am eighth grade. We would never be talking about what we are doing in our classrooms during the day. There is just no time and it wouldn't occur to us, really. So, yes, CCL did [increase collaboration]. Just to say, "how is it going in your room? I tried this. This is really working."* Teacher N

Summary: Benefits of CCL. The process embodied in CCL matches the theory of learning embedded in both the workshop model and in Boston's theory of whole-school improvement. Boston's theory postulates that the way to achieve improved instruction is to support teachers at their school sites as they learn in collaboration with one another. Collaborative learning until the 2001-2002 school year had been facilitated by asking teachers and principals to engage in implementing the Essentials, which, when undertaken with skillful support of a coach, helped to change the social structure and intellectual capital of each school. By increasing teachers' learning in collaboration with one another, CCL builds on the foundation fostered by the Essentials. CCL enhances teachers' opportunities to share common language, common practices, and common goals for their students.

Education Matters recognizes that at the outset CCL was threatening and principals reported that, initially, teachers were not eager to participate. Yet over time, they have come to see the value of using this model.

> *Three of the teachers are as enthusiastic as I've seen them about anything. But, they really asked questions when they heard CCL [for the first time]. There are some veteran teachers in the grouping and it is very interesting to hear their comments. Someone who is ready to retire in a year actually said, "Boy, this is really interesting. You know,[at first] sitting here with you guys talking about this Balanced Literacy, I didn't know what you were talking about. Now I know." I said, "Well, maybe you should think about not retiring." So I'm thinking she's one example, because at the beginning she said, "No, no way I'm doing this." Now she is doing it.* Principal B

The benefits of CCL in its first year, as described by teachers and principals, demonstrate the further expansion of the collaborative, instructionally focused culture that these schools had achieved and that gained them EP status. Their comments strongly suggest that the coaching model now in place in the EP schools aligns well with the district's theory of reform. As such, one would expect students taught by teachers who have participated in CCL and have implemented the Readers' and Writers' Workshop strategies into their classrooms to soon demonstrate the impact of improved teaching in the form of increased achievement as measured on the MCAS as well as school and district benchmark assessments.

CHALLENGES PRESENTED BY CCL.

Although teachers and principals valued CCL as an approach to literacy professional development, implementing the model challenged them in a number of areas. By using feedback from the schools, the BPE has already moved to address some of these issues for the 2002-2003 school year. The first challenge was scheduling teachers so that they had time for the pre-conference, lab site, and debrief. Principals used creative scheduling and coverage strategies so as to make CCL implementation possible.[17] Second, as originally conceived, each CCL cycle ran for six weeks. Teachers, principals, and coaches working within this time frame realized that the cycles should be longer in order to accomplish their goals. As a result, cycles for the 2002-2003 school year will run for eight weeks. Third, during the first year of implementation, each EP school had the same coaching allocation. For large schools, this meant a smaller proportion of teachers could participate than in schools with fewer teachers. Principals wanted additional coaching time. The BPE addressed this concern and in the 2002-2003 school year large schools will have more coaching cycles than will small schools.[18]

Schools did a remarkable job of adapting CCL to their particular contexts and they solved a number of problems associated with the first year of implementation. Still, at the end of the year, the model posed challenges that remained to be addressed. These include issues associated with a) the lab site itself, for example, who participates and who demonstrates teaching

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[17] Scheduling was not a focus of Education Matters' work, however, and so we do not detail the scheduling issues in this report. However, we note that scheduling cross-grade lab sites remained difficult and some schools struggled with coverage issues throughout the year. Likewise, coverage remained a problem for many schools and the BPE is looking into a range of possibilities from substitute programs to graduate student internships to help schools manage these issues in the future.

[18] Additional cycles can be created by having two coaches lead lab sites at the same time. In this way, a school could effectively be running two lab site cycles, each with different teachers and coaches, simultaneously. Or, a second coach could conduct cycles during the first coach's "off-cycle."

strategies, b) principal participation, c) sustaining the work in the off-cycle, and d) providing coaches with appropriate professional development.[19] We turn now to these issues.

A. Developing and Implementing the Lab Sites. By teachers', principals', and coaches' accounts, lab sites varied a great deal in their implementation and success as measured by the schools' standards and those set by the BPE.[20] Education Matters' observations of seven different lab site sessions confirms these conclusions. Some lab sites, such as the one we used as an exemplar in this paper, ran well. Others were troubled by minimal teacher participation, weak demonstration teaching, claims of weak coaching, and strong, albeit scattered, teacher resistance to CCL.

Some schools were able to overcome the challenges they faced and later lab sites were improvements over earlier ones. Other schools were unable to overcome the challenges or overcame only some of them. These challenges remained in the face of considerable teacher support for implementing CCL. In other words, they were not merely the result of resistance, although resistance contributed to some of them. They highlight genuine dilemmas that teachers, principals and coaches faced as they did their best to implement CCL. As such, they merit consideration in the service of informing the BPE's and the schools' discussions of how to modify CCL, if necessary, and better support its implementation in the coming years.

We begin this section with a discussion of the ways in which lab site membership was developed in light of school-based considerations. Then we turn to a discussion of the reasons teachers might resist participating in the lab sites and the challenges raised by this reality. Following this discussion, we consider factors that influenced the design and focus of the course of study associated with the lab site. Next, we consider the issues associated with having a host classroom and deciding who should demonstrate the teaching strategies. We conclude with a discussion of the lab site debriefs and the need for teachers and principals to develop norms for providing feedback to one another.

1. Constructing Teacher Membership of a Lab Site. For the most part, principals, in consultation with their coaches and/or literacy coordinators and specialists, determined the make-up and focus of the initial lab sites and often chose the host teacher. Some principals decided to construct lab sites with teachers who were least familiar with Readers' and Writers' Workshop in order to insure that they began the year with a significant opportunity to learn to use aspects of this literacy approach. Others formed lab sites with a mixture of more and less experienced teachers so that the less experienced teachers could see their colleagues demonstrate

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[19]We are well-aware of the importance of the change coaches in the continuing development of organizational and instructional capacity in the EP schools. And, we are concerned that the change coach and literacy coach work be integrated into each school's Whole-School Improvement Plan (WSIP). However, in this report, we focus on the work of the literacy coaches as it related more directly to the implementation of CCL in the first year.

[20]See our earlier discussion in this paper on variations in implementation, CCL in Practice: Variations on the Design.

the literacy strategies. Some principals relied on grade-level teams while others saw virtues in cross-grade lab site teams. Some lab sites were small, made up of two or three teachers, while others were at least twice as large. Finally, some teachers genuinely volunteered to participate while others were "strongly urged" to join a lab site.

Principals also varied in the rationales they used for choosing host teachers. Some chose as host teachers individuals whose teaching was good but who had not stepped forward, as yet, into any leadership position. Still others chose relatively new or inexperienced teachers' classrooms as host sites in the hopes that these teachers would garner extra support from the coach and teacher colleagues. Others chose teachers whose classes were already functioning well in the workshop format. Such classrooms, the principal reasoned, provided a context for learning in which the students are familiar with the instructional strategies and can work independently. Principals also thought about selecting as host sites classrooms in which students would be likely to work in the presence of observers, as well as respond positively to different teachers instructing them.

But whatever the principals' reasoning might have been, during the first year of CCL, many teachers said they were unaware of how the lab site had been set up or why it was configured as it was.

Our data reveal that the design and composition of the lab site, in and of itself, was not the deciding factor associated with its success or failure. In other words, any one of the lab site configurations described above might succeed or fail depending on the teachers involved, their orientation to the work, the capacity of the principal to schedule the teachers and provide coverage for their students, and the skillfulness of the coach. Still, the composition of a lab site can – and in many cases did – pose dilemmas for participants. We highlight some of these issues below in the interest of demonstrating how the configuration of a lab site can affect a) its final outcome, and b) its participants.

We begin with a discussion of some of the challenges created by heterogeneously formed lab sites. In such lab sites, some teachers felt that they did not learn enough from observing less skillful teachers as a result of the work being focused at what they called more of a beginner level.

> *Probably there were two or three of us that had [been fully trained], and I think five that hadn't. I found it just a little bit frustrating. I had gone through [training] and worked through it on my own, and then I had to start from scratch again.* Teacher I

Other teachers felt that their colleagues, such as the host teacher in the next example, might not have learned enough.

> *And then, for the writing workshop, I don't know if the lab site has been all that beneficial to a lot of other teachers in my group. They really don't think they understand what's going on. [The host] teacher was at a different place than we*

were; she didn't start from scratch. She had received a lot of help from another teacher at her grade level, so her class was actually in the midst of [doing workshop] when we first watched her. So some teachers who had no idea what a Writers' Workshop was...they'd say where, why, what, and they were totally lost....For some teachers who hadn't had the exposure and hadn't tried it at all last year, they found it very difficult. Teacher J

The challenge for heterogeneously formed lab sites, then, is to create professional development opportunities within the small group that meet the needs of all of the learners. This is, of course, the same problem that teachers face when working with their students.

Another challenge arose as a result of lab sites comprised of monolingual and bilingual teachers, some of which were hosted by bilingual teachers. In some bilingual classrooms, instruction was in English during the lab site period and teachers were able to see that the workshop model could be effective in bilingual settings. This helped coaches convince other bilingual teachers that workshop was appropriate for their students. But, such a lab site could also be problematic. As one coach put it, in some lab sites, bilingual and monolingual teachers did not "blend well together." And, we know of instances in which the bilingual class was taught in a language other than English during lab site periods. Although teachers observed during those classes, and said they could benefit from the observation, such observations were quite limited in their capacity to generate teacher reflection due to the language barrier. Coaches and teachers involved in such lab sites were making the best of a difficult situation by debriefing about the structure of the lab sites – patterns of interaction, for example. But, they could not talk about the content of these interactions since they could not understand either the students' or the teachers' remarks during class.

Several coaches commented that they were challenged by the questions and needs of bilingual teachers regardless of the composition of the lab site itself. As one coach noted,

Bilingual issues, for sure [are a challenge]. I mean, the bilingual teachers in all the groups that I have had, except for one,...They question a lot more, and authoritatively say, "This isn't going to work with bilingual kids." I am not a bilingual expert. So that is a problem. I can't say [how to make it work.] I can say, well, look at [X teacher's] class. She is a teacher who has bilingual kids, who is doing straight Readers' Workshop, straight Writers' Workshop and I can point to her and say, "Look how well it is working in there." But I definitely find that is an issue for me. Coach A

Some principals preferred to create grade-level teams as lab sites, thereby minimizing some of the challenges posed by heterogeneous groups, but school-based factors often argued against this strategy. First, as some schools learned during their first cycle, a grade-level lab site might be too small to encourage the kind of teacher conversation and collaboration encouraged by the CCL model. Second, as described above, other factors, such as providing opportunities for teachers to learn from one another, took priority over the desire for grade-level lab sites. And,

sometimes the willingness of teachers to participate played a role in the composition of a lab site. With this in mind, we turn next to challenges posed by teachers who were resistant to working in the lab site and the ways in which principals and coaches encouraged their participation.

2. Dealing with Resistant Teachers. Teachers resisted participating in lab sites for a number of different reasons. Some had not yet adopted a "continuous learning" orientation to their own development. Having mastered the rudiments of Readers' and Writers' Workshop, they felt no further need for professional development. Others objected to spending their time observing a teacher who might be less skilled than themselves (or even just younger) arguing that they had nothing to learn from such observations. These teachers did not yet see themselves as part of a learning community in which their participation would consist of both teaching and learning with their colleagues. They did not accept that they might, indeed, learn something of value from seeing a colleague struggle with a lesson. Still others were afraid of demonstrating what they knew they could not do well. Some of these teachers had not been trained in the workshop model, while others could not manage its organizational demands. These teachers feared embarrassment as well as negative feedback from colleagues who would observe their weaknesses. A few did not respect or have confidence in the coach. Some teachers profoundly disagreed with the workshop model as a viable strategy for improving students' reading and writing skills. They disagreed, regardless of whether or not they had a deep understanding of workshop and how it supported children's literacy development. And, finally, some teachers resisted for a combination of the above reasons.

Across elementary schools, our data led us to conclude that upper grade elementary teachers exhibited the greatest resistance to participating in lab sites and the greatest challenge to principals and coaches. Coaches and principals speculated that their resistance, for the most part, resulted from the schools' initial literacy models – for example Bel Mondo or the Literacy Collaborative – having emphasized the primary grades. Upper grade elementary teachers were, therefore, less familiar with the literacy strategies, and less likely to have worked with the coach even if she was in the school the previous year. As a result, they had formed no relationship with the coach and were unsure of the coaches' abilities and trustworthiness.

> *I think the upper grades are just in such a different place than the lower grades. First of all, they don't know me. Whereas, last year, I did workshops for everybody K-3. So, all the K-3 teachers knew me already. I had a relationship with them. They trusted me, and so on. Fifth grade, here I am. I start with lab site. I hadn't even seen some of these people before. The first week they are saying, "Who are you, really? What qualifies you to be here?"* Coach A

> *Fifth grade teachers, there is something about 5th grade teachers across the district. I'm working with two other 5th grades [in another school] I'm working with all 5th grades in all my schools. I love them. I really do, because I'm drawn to resistance. ...We just met to try to come up with a course of study. Didn't get there. Did not get there. But I got them talking, and got them talking about what they felt they did and what they really had [implemented]. The next to the last*

meeting I had with the 5th grade teachers, a very strong, strong teacher said, "Look. I don't know how to do what you're talking about." And that's when I say to myself. "Thank you. Now we have a starting point." That teacher opened the door a slight bit for other teachers to approach me one-on-one to say where they want to go. Coach B

If principals succeeded in persuading resistant teachers, upper grade or not, to participate in lab sites, their presence often posed challenges to their colleague teachers and to their coaches. Initially, they might express negative attitudes toward the professional development work and toward their colleagues.

In one group, there's one teacher who, no matter if God was the coach, it wouldn't work. Won't do it. And she could, given the opportunity, get the whole group to her [negative] side, and that's her goal, for some reason. That's a challenge...It's a challenge for me, it's a challenge for the principal, and it's a challenge for the staff. If someone is articulate too, and smart and articulate in such a way, even though they're not necessarily right or the point is irrelevant, it can get to the faculty-- It can shift things and make people uncomfortable enough to say, "Okay, fine, we'll do it that way, because I just don't want to deal with the confrontation." Coach B

In circumstances such as the one just described, for the sake of sustaining the learning opportunity for other teachers, a principal might have given a teacher the option of not participating in the lab site. But, in such circumstances, principals made it clear that the teacher was responsible for high quality implementation of Readers' and Writers' Workshop with or without the support provided by CCL and the coach.

Not all upper grade lab sites were as difficult as the one just described, but they often posed challenges to coaches and principals.[21] It took considerable perseverance to initiate, let alone sustain lab site work with such teachers, but sometimes the effort succeeded. Several coaches as well as principals reported that participating in a lab site could change resistant teachers' minds about the value of the process.

We have emphasized some of the challenges that teachers, coaches and principals faced in creating workable lab site groupings with resistant teachers. But, we want to remind readers that, by and large, teachers, quite gamely, participated in the lab sites and came to appreciate the value of their organization and focus. In many schools, by the end of the school year, there were fewer resistant teachers than in September. The positive response of most teachers to the CCL model, in our view, led resistant teachers to consider their peers' experiences and give the model a try.

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[21]We will return to the issue of resistance below when discussing the principals' role in the lab site.

3. Establishing Host Classrooms and Demonstration Teaching Schedules. The design of CCL calls for identifying one teacher to host the lab site, having one class serve as the demonstration and practice site for participating teachers.

Principals and coaches varied in the criteria they used in selecting the host classroom. As we described above, some principals chose host classrooms because their teachers were already implementing Readers' and Writers' Workshop at a high level. In such classrooms, the thinking was that students' familiarity with the workshop model would enable them to respond well to teachers' practice efforts. Principals might also choose as host teachers those who could benefit from additional coach support. But, regardless of the reasons for selecting a host teacher, the coach would work with the teacher to prepare for the lab site, as one coach explained.

> *The host teacher gets a little more of my time, so those kids are a little more familiar with how things are, and what the workshop is and what is expected. They have had a few more lessons with me, with myself and the teacher. And if the principal is providing time for these teachers to come together, you want them to see the best possible set-up. You don't want them to go in a classroom that is not going to work. Coach D*

Thinking back to the exemplar, in order for the class to be a successful setting for teacher learning, it was important that the students were familiar with mini-lessons, conferences, and guided reading, and that they could sustain their independent reading time while the teachers observed.

A host classroom might be taught by a special education or bilingual teacher. Such classrooms were evidence of the workshop model's effectiveness in other than mainstream or monolingual classrooms. In addition, such classrooms exemplified the district's commitment to Readers' and Writers' Workshop for all students.

> *I think she purposely picked classes where she felt like it wasn't going to be such a big leap for the teachers and for the kids. She picked a bilingual room which I wouldn't have chosen. But, in the end, it actually worked out really well. That teacher has great routines going with her kids, and she has got a good rapport with them. I think the other teachers recognized that, and they thought she would be a good place to have it.* Coach A

The host teacher's responsibilities varied depending on the coach and on the lab site. Some host teachers carried a considerable burden by doing most of the demonstration teaching. Others had a role that was hardly distinguishable from that of the other participating teachers.

Having one host classroom for the entire cycle provided the benefit of familiarity over the six week period. But, it was challenging because it required teachers to practice with students they did not know well. Some teachers adapted quite readily to this condition, but others argued strongly for the opportunity to try the workshop strategies with their own students. This led

some lab sites to minimize or ignore the use of a host site. In such adaptations, teachers moved from class to class depending on which teacher was doing the demonstrating. This meant that demonstrations took place in classrooms that were more or less set up for the workshop model. Coaches worried about the value of demonstration lessons that were done in classrooms that had not yet been set up for workshop, in which students were less familiar with the instructional strategies. In addition, this adaptation meant that a lab site could not be organized as was the one in the exemplar where several different teachers had an opportunity to demonstrate during the same day. As with all organizational features of CCL, the host teacher model varied in its effectiveness as did rotating lab sites.

The success of the host-teacher/non-host teacher arrangement was related to another aspect of CCL, the expertise with which teachers demonstrated workshop strategies. Although the design of CCL includes teachers demonstrating in front of their peers, some lab site participants wanted the coach to do all of the demonstrating. Most coaches did not accept such a role for themselves, but their lab sites did vary in terms of how much demonstrating was done by the coach, the host, and/or the participating teachers.

> *I'll do two lessons, and then they have to start taking over. It's funny, I have talked to a lot of different coaches, and [in the beginning] they didn't realize that the teachers were supposed to be doing lessons. So they have been doing all the lessons. But the CCL model does say that teachers need to start taking over, so that when I am not there, they will still do it. It usually makes sense that the first teacher to do it is the host teacher, because they have gotten a little more of my time. And it is their classroom. But it is voluntary. Coach D*

In a small number of host classrooms, the host teacher then did all of the demonstration teaching. As a result, other teachers watched, but did not have opportunities to practice in front of their peers. Worse were situations in which the host teachers were new to the workshop approach – whether or not they were experienced teachers – and, as a result, did not demonstrate skillful instruction. Worse still were situations in which the host teacher was quite convinced of her expertise and would not engage in conversations with the coach about the demonstrations.

> *I was pretty honest with the host teacher and I said, "Your lessons are way too long on time. Mini-lessons shouldn't be more than ten minutes. Yours is twenty-five ...And she would say, "Listen, you and I had the same kind of training. I know just as much as you do. If you want to come in, fine, but I am fine. I can do this. I know how to do it."* Coach E

Participating teachers – especially those who were already moderately skillful – grew tired of observing such instruction and felt they were not learning from the lab site. But novice teachers, also, had a difficult time learning from such lab sites.

Some coaches found themselves unable to remedy such situations. They reported that they did not have the facilitation skills with which to reduce the host teachers' role and enable other

teachers to demonstrate and practice. Though they might have suggested a rotating lab site for part of the cycle, in some lab sites there were no other teachers willing to demonstrate. Furthermore, coaches feared the conflict that would accompany any move to change the process of the lab site.

These situations raise the issue of how to strike a balance between the coach and/or host teacher and the other lab site participants demonstrating in front of one another. And, they raise the challenge of how to handle situations in which the demonstrating teachers' practice is too weak to provide learning opportunities for colleagues.

4. Determining a Meaningful Course of Study. During each coaching cycle, teachers were to focus on improving their work in an area of Readers' or Writers' Workshop. But, schools also varied in their implementation of this component of CCL. Our data do not reveal large challenges posed by the need to choose a course of study, but we want to describe some of the variations employed at the schools in order to stress the importance of local variation to successful implementation.

In some schools, the principal chose the course of study. Teachers then signed up for the cycle if the course of study interested them. In addition, the principal might have urged some teachers to participate in a particular lab site because the course of study would help them improve their practice. In other settings, the teachers involved in the cycle met with the coach to choose the course of study. As the year went on, and when cycles were working well, teachers would choose a subsequent course of study for the next cycle in light of what they learned in the cycle they had just completed. Such teachers provided evidence that principal-organized lab sites could lead to teacher buy-in with respect to the teachers' desire for additional lab sites as well as increase teacher expertise in identifying their own learning needs. Finally, there were schools and lab sites that still had difficulty focusing on a course of study even at the end of the year.

In some schools, selecting the course of study was informed by the principal, the coach and the ILT as well as the teachers. In the ideal model of CCL, the ILT should be involved in making decisions such as those described by Coach B.

> *It is eventually determined by the teachers in any cycle. I meet first with the principal. I meet with the principal, and she gives me like an overview of where the teachers are at. The ILT also comes in at this point because, if [the ILT is] going well, they have looked at their formative data and looked at test scores and said, "What grade level are we falling down on?" And they ask, "Where?" Is it in reading? Is it in writing?"* Coach B

ILT involvement was not mentioned by many of the coaches, principals, or teachers who we interviewed during the 2001-2002 school year.

The knowledge base that teachers brought to the lab site sometimes influenced their ability to choose a focus for their course of study. Because upper grade elementary teachers had

participated in less literacy training than their primary level counterparts – which led some of them to resist participation in the lab sites – some of these groups had a difficult time agreeing on a course of study. In fact, instead of implementing a lab site, some upper elementary groups spent a cycle creating and organizing their classroom libraries so that they would be able to begin implementing Readers' and Writers' Workshop during their next cycle.[22] But, in contrast, some upper elementary grade groups had an easier time making a commitment to what they wanted to learn while primary teams struggled.

> *On the first day of the cycle we talked about what it was they wanted to learn more about and they set the course of study. The primary team changed several times within the six weeks. They finally did shared reading. The [upper] elementary team wanted to do guided reading. They decided what they wanted to study, and then we, as a team, mapped out what it was going to look like, who was going to be the lab site host teacher, how many times I was going to demonstrate, what was going to happen when I didn't demonstrate, when they started demonstrating. So we kind of set that the first meeting.* Coach D

Another lab site group was not sure what to focus on until teachers had observed the students in the host teacher's class for the first time. And this coach, like the coach cited above, worked differently in developing a course of study with each of the lab site groups in the school.

> *What we needed to do next became clear from what we were seeing with the kids. So we really didn't plan out the whole cycle because I wanted to use what the kids were doing [to plan]. With the upper grade group, we did talk a little bit about what we wanted to see the first twenty days, and we kind of knew the general course it would take. But, with the lower grades, we did a lot more of: what did we see today? What do we need to do next week? Coach A*

Coaches had to vary their expectations and strategies with regard to designing a course of study just as they had to vary their work with other aspects of the lab site.

5. Debriefing the Lab Site Sessions. Establishing Norms for Feedback. According to the CCL model, after each lab site session, teachers and the coach were to meet to review what had been demonstrated, to consider the lessons learned, and to plan next steps. Some of the debriefs (or some parts of the debriefs) were effective, with teachers raising significant points and asking good questions about the lab site. For example, the teacher who taught the mini-lesson described in the exemplar wanted to know whether she should have introduced a new reading comprehension strategy when students could not come up with many on their own. This was a question that many teachers might have had under the circumstances and the coach was able to answer, reviewing the importance of keeping the mini-lesson focused on one point at a time. Simultaneously, she gave the teacher positive feedback for what she had done – cut short the mini-lesson when it was not leading to the desired outcome for students.

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[22]A few groups spent all but the last two weeks of a cycle in inquiry before venturing into a classroom.

However, the exemplar also demonstrates a problem that coaches and teachers described quite often: what to do when the demonstrated lesson was weak or did not exemplify skillful workshop strategies. In the exemplar, neither the coach nor the teachers brought up the weakness of the guided reading lesson. The coach did not discuss the reasons why she asked the students to re-read the first chapter rather than have them follow the demonstrating teacher's instructions to move on to the next chapter. No one asked a question about this or about better strategies to use when working on vocabulary. As we discussed earlier, coaches see themselves walking a thin line between giving feedback that can help and sustain the group and giving feedback that is deemed too critical. The challenge for coaches, and for teachers, is to learn how to walk that thin line throughout the entire lab site, not just when the lesson goes well. Teachers, coaches, and principals, perhaps, need to establish norms for feedback that encourage supportive criticism as well as genuine praise.

Nonetheless, even coaches who were skillful in encouraging constructive feedback ran into difficulty during debriefs. We listened to one coach pose thoughtful questions to a teacher who had been unable to describe the focus of her lesson prior to demonstrating and had little to say when it was over. The coach's questions did not engage the teacher in any conversation.[23] Asked to explain the teaching point of her lesson after the fact and whether it had been successful, the teacher reiterated that she had no specific teaching point, only a general one. She was unable to discuss the ways in which the lesson had and had not met her own objectives. One of the other teachers in the lab site, perhaps sensing the discomfort in the room, identified positive aspects of the lesson – students participated and volunteered to share their work – and offered considerable praise.

> *People are afraid to really tell it like it is. You know, like for example, if one [teacher] gave a lesson that really stunk, nobody really wanted to say anything, at least not in a public forum. So basically everybody would say, "Oh, I am really learning a lot, blah, blah, blah." Sometimes people aren't really completely truthful.* Coach E

At the other extreme, were lab sites with teachers who were overtly critical of whatever they saw: the demonstration, the host teacher's Word Wall, or the organization of books. Such negatively oriented teachers posed significant challenges to coaches. While they needed skills with which to encourage constructive criticism, they also needed skills with which to quiet teachers whose negativity had the potential to stifle any conversation.

Coaches reported having difficulty encouraging instructionally focused, full-participation during these discussions and said that despite their efforts, some teachers remained reticent. In such circumstances, their debrief sessions were more successful when an additional support person – a literacy coordinator, a Director of Instruction or a literacy specialist was present. Coaches found it valuable to have with them a teacher or administrator who had another kind of coaching role in

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[23]It is also possible that the teacher, by not engaging herself in the conversation, was resisting participation. She had not wanted to be involved in a lab site.

the school. Education Matters observed a number of debrief sessions in which the support person(s) asked probing questions about the lesson they had observed, volunteered to model an aspect of the workshop approach and/or encouraged other teachers to consider appropriate next steps for future lab sites and cycles. These debriefs were easier to facilitate because the coach did not bear the sole responsibility of sustaining the conversation. Still, this need for teacher leaders should remind coaches and the BPE that they have not yet succeeded in getting lab site teachers fully engaged in their professional development.

Summary: Challenges Associated With Lab Sites. Lab sites are the heart of CCL and it is not surprising that most of the benefits as well as the challenges of CCL are associated with its implementation. The challenges became apparent as principals, coaches, and teachers worked with the model and determined ways to adapt it to their local situations. The size and composition of the lab sites, the choice of a course of study, the role of the host teacher and classroom, the allocation of responsibility for demonstrating literacy strategies, the resistance of some teachers, and the challenges of debriefing all rose to the foreground as implementation moved forward. The challenges were inevitable and they are informative. They highlight the value of each component of the lab sites and provide insights into strategies that are worth pursuing and those that should be dropped. As such, the lab site challenges reflect the fact that schools worked hard to make CCL successful, that teachers experienced new ways of learning, and that everyone involved has developed more wisdom about how to proceed in the coming year.

B. Sustaining Professional Development in the Off-Cycle. During its first year, CCL was designed so that many schools were "on-cycle" for six weeks and then "off-cycle" for at least another six weeks. In contrast, some schools had back-to-back cycles and then longer off-cycle periods. Ideally, teachers and the coach would have developed a plan for the off-cycle and teachers would have the capacity and the desire to continue to implement the workshop strategies in their rooms absent the coach. They would continue to meet together either in grade team meetings, lab site groupings, or conduct peer observations with a specific focus related to the lab site work. At some time during the off-cycle, the coach would conduct a "check-back" day which might involve brief meetings with individual lab site teachers or the entire lab site group and/or the demonstration of a teaching point at the teachers' request. Sustaining the work in the off-cycle and making good use of the check-back day were identified as significant challenges by principals and coaches. Many were not satisfied with the quality of off-cycle work at their schools.

In reality, the extent to which the off-cycle work continued and the check-back day was effective varied considerably. Lab site members who had been engaged in their professional development during the cycle may have been more likely to use the literacy strategies and work together when the coach was not in the schools than their less engaged colleagues. But not always.[24] Resistance

[24]Some coaches and principals were astonished to see almost no implementation during the off-cycle after what had appeared to be a successful lab site. This phenomena suggests that it may take teachers longer than six weeks, even in an intensive CCL cycle, to master the strategies sufficiently enough to carry them out on their own.

and engagement were important factors contributing to work in the off-cycle. But perhaps more important, coaches reported, was that principal participation in the lab site and overt attention to teachers' use of the strategies during and after the cycle had a great influence on the off-cycle work. In schools where principals took an active role in the lab site and/or made it clear to teachers that the work was important, more teachers were likely to continue with implementation. Such principals were also more likely to report doing frequent walkthroughs which left them fully aware of who was and was not implementing Readers' and Writers' Workshop.

Another factor contributed to the success of the off-cycle: the extent to which someone else in the school – the literacy coordinator or specialist, for example – could continue some of the lab site activities and coach individual teachers. As principals became aware of this need, they tried to insure that teacher leaders participated in the lab sites for their own learning and in order to sustain the work in the coaches' absence. And, principals realized that they had to plan strategically if they were to develop more internal coaching capacity. Toward this end, a few principals began to have their literacy coordinators increase their expertise by shadowing the coaches as they worked with individual teachers subsequent to the lab site sessions.

When they went well, the check-back days could be of great value.

> *At [one school] we came back together and we talked about what they had been doing. "How had the class visits been going? Were they helpful? Were they not helpful?" ...They were doing author studies so I asked how that was going and what they needed from me. What did they need from the principal? And then, what we were going to do for our own cycle when I come back? And we are going to do conferencing, so we ordered the books. We talked about what chapters to read, and we talked about how to prepare. We talked about who is going to do the demonstration lesson on Tuesday. What is that going to look like? We kind of laid out a schedule, so now for six weeks we don't have to sit there every week and say, "Who is doing the demonstration next week?" Coach D*

But check-back days, overall, were disappointing to many principals and coaches. Most of the coaches with whom we spoke concluded, by and large, that one check-back day did not provide enough time for them to really determine how teachers were doing and then provide the appropriate support. This was true for coaches who were implementing a different lab site in the same school as well as for coaches who were now working in a different school.

> *I am not thrilled with the check-back day. That was something I wanted to talk to people about on Friday [at the coaches' debrief]: What have others done with check-back days, and how they are dealing with them? I feel like I am totally cut off from those teachers [who were in the lab site]. Here I am in the same building, and I still don't have one minute to go and help them or check in with*

It also suggests the need for more monitoring and support for teachers during the off-cycles.

them and talk to them, except for this one little check-back day. ...It's very hard for me to know what is going on in their rooms because I don't really even have the time to go in and see what is going on. So I think that is a bit of a fault in the model and I wanted to bring that up Friday. Coach A

The check back days are a real struggle for me. I feel very guilty canceling a cycle day for the schools I'm in and saying, "I'm going to check back."... I have to work on this, because other coaches are better than me at saying, "Hey, I've got to go check back with my old school." Coach B[25]

As coaches struggled to increase the value of the check-back days, some made decisions about how to spend their time on the basis of teachers' demonstrated interest in continuing to learn.

We just finished a cycle two weeks ago, and so I haven't done check backs. But I intend to follow up with the people that I know had me in their room, to see how they are doing. I feel that the participating teachers who have invited me back to work in their rooms, they are the ones who I am going to invest my energy in. I am not going to [deal with the resistant ones]. I will always have a collegial conversation with them, ask, "How is it going? Is there any way I can help, or anything I can do?" But I am not going to force myself on those people. Coach E

Others could find no successful way to conduct check-back days in the face of teachers' active or passive resistance.

My check-back day wasn't what I had expected it to be. [One teacher and I] had settled on a project for the day. [The teacher] was absent the day I came. I left a note for her and I never heard from her. I've talked to the Director of Instruction and she has continued some of the work [with the teacher], but it's hard. It's hard when you're not there. Coach C

By the end of the 2001-2002 school year, coaches, principals, and many teachers concluded that the CCL approach for the off-cycle required some redesign considerations.

C. The Principals' Role in Addressing Challenges. Throughout this report we have identified ways in which principals played crucial roles in the first year implementation of CCL. They informed their teachers about the model at the start of the school year and they took a great role in developing schedules that would make the cycles possible. Principals organized the membership of lab sites and informed their courses of study. They coaxed resistant teachers to participate and created opportunities for new and experienced teachers to have an active role in their own professional development. There is no question that the EP principals, because of their

[25]A number of coaches felt conflicted about taking time away from ongoing lab sites to conduct their check-back days. They also had difficulty finding days when all of the former lab site teachers would be available.

knowledge, skill, and commitment, made the first year of CCL possible and quite successful. In this section, we link the challenges discussed throughout the report with a) principals' involvement with lab sites, and b) principals' ability to provide support to coaches and teachers as they implemented their lab site work.

Principals' Involvement with Lab Sites. As described by the BPE, principals are to take a significant role in the work of at least one lab site and keep track of the work in others.

> The principal-headmaster will be an active participant in one lab site and also take part in the course of study. In addition, he or she will periodically visit the other lab sites in the school and will be responsible for observing and supporting implementation of the Readers' Workshop or Writers' Workshop components when the coach is not on site. (See Appendix A).

Principal participation mattered for a number of reasons. First, by committing a substantial amount of time to the lab site, principals demonstrated their support for the work. Second, by doing the reading, they demonstrated the importance of increasing their knowledge about Readers' and Writers' Workshop. And, third, by fully participating in the lab site – by demonstrating a guided reading lesson or student conference – principals took the same risks their teachers were taking. They demonstrated to teachers that there would be no penalty for demonstrating new practices in a less-than-expert-manner. For all of these reasons, coaches wanted principals involved in at least one lab site.

> *I need the principal's support. I need the principal to be an active participant.... They have to be at every lab site. They have to be in the inquiry groups. And they have to come as learners. They have to be quiet. They have to have equal weight [with the teachers], not be the principal, which is a tricky thing, because when push comes to shove, they need to also say, "You need to do this." But at the same time, they have to be weighing in as a learner, and I expect them to be a learner. I expect them to be able to meet with me regularly to talk about what's going on, without me ratting teachers out, so to speak, but making a plan of how we're going to support this person. I expect them to be out in the building when I'm not there and when I come back, they can say, "Hey! I saw this or that." And to give the teachers the release time to observe each other and go see other schools. That's a lot to ask of an administrator, but in the schools where that happens, I think that's where you see the work shifting.* Coach B

> *The teachers know that it is important because the principal has taken time to be there. And it is time, because it is about an hour-and-a-half, twice a week. So the principal is there, the principal is doing the reading, the principal is asking questions about how this is going to happen. And the principal is there and hears the concerns of the teachers, I can't make this happen, I need more time for this, or whatever the issues are with the teachers, the principal is there to hear it. It is*

all right there. Everybody is supporting each other. It just makes a huge difference. Coach D

What I notice is that it's the principals who are coming to all of the cycle planning, the workshops, and who are also in there teaching and making mistakes and being willing to put themselves out. I know how important it is. I think that's something that we all know, and we've read it, and it's in words, but now it's really in my heart. Coach C

As with all aspects of CCL, principals varied in the extent of their participation in the lab sites and this mattered more in some lab sites than in others.[26] For example, there was no principal participation in the exemplar lab site and it functioned quite well. Yet, other lab sites in that school and in other schools in our sample fared poorly without principal participation. When principals began to participate in such lab sites, the tenor of the lab site changed and teachers began engaging with the work.

In that lab site, I felt like I needed more support from the principal than I got originally, even support of her just being there because the dynamic is very different if she comes to the debrief. ... With this [upper] grade group, the teachers aren't even really interested in what I am doing, and then there is no one saying, "Hey, there is really benefit in this," except for me, and who am I? They don't even know who I am. Coach A

Principal Support for Coaches and Teachers. Principals could make a difference to the quality of a lab site by participating. Principals could also influence the extent to which teachers tried the literacy practices in their classrooms during and after the lab site cycles. In several schools, where coaches saw little implementation, the situation improved after principals met with teachers and told them that using Readers' and Writers' Workshop was a district priority and not an option.

I think there is always a natural resistance for people to have to do something that they may or may not want to do. In our school, the principal said, "You are doing it [the workshop model]. Everybody is doing it. That's it. It's not negotiable. I think that was good because that is what pushed us to go forward. [The principal] has had to be tough because, if she is not, then nothing gets done. Coach E

In contrast, in schools where implementation was faltering and principals took no direct action, implementation remained low throughout the year according to coaches, principals and teachers. But, on the positive side, in such situations, principals realized the importance of their participation in the lab site and in the follow-up.

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[26] At a number of schools, assistant principals and/or directors of instruction participated fully in the lab site work. Their participation could substitute for that of the principal.

So now, where am I? Sort of knowing it all. [laughs] You don't give CCL away, I've got to know about it, I need to participate more. Principal C

Coaches also sought principals help to garner support for individual teachers. For example, a coach might have been working with a teachers who thought she was doing guiding reading but was not, in the coaches' view. Just as it was difficult for coaches to provide critical feedback during debriefs, it was difficult for them to know how to talk to teachers in this kind of situation. Many coaches approached principals for help and found them able to address the issue. For example, one coach explained a problem that she faced.

We had been in a course of study for about four weeks. And, I went into a classroom, and I don't know what was going on, but it wasn't guided reading, and the teacher was calling it guided reading, and it was a big problem. You don't want to do this all the time, because you break down the trust, but I talked to the principal, and I said, "You know, maybe we can get some support [for this teacher] when I am not here. Who is the support that we can get so that they would work well together?" And it made all the difference. I went back and this teacher actually taught the demonstration lesson. The principal made a huge difference. Coach D

Another coach talked to the principal when she realized that teachers were not trying any of the workshop strategies practiced in the lab site in their own classrooms. The principal made sure that teachers knew that Readers' and Writers' Workshop was a district priority and that it was going to be implemented in the school.

I talked to [the principal] about that because they are supposed to go back and try some of this. And she came to one of the debriefs and she really laid it on thick; saying, "This is it. This is not a choice anymore. Everyone is going to be doing Readers' Workshop." ... And then there was a point in a lower grade group in which things really changed [after the principal talked to them]. By the next week, things really got up and running because of that conversation. They weren't very happy about it, but then it did happen. And then, the principal had sent one teacher to a conference [on the literacy strategies], and she came back pretty excited, and then the group got into it. And a lot of people from that lab site then became part of the next one, too. Coach A

When we wrote about the importance of principals to the implementation of the ILTs and LASW groups in Education Matters' *Taking Stock (2001)* report, we pointed out the centrality of principals to the implementation of these components of the Essentials. It is clear from the data on the first year of CCL that principals, once again, have a pivotal role in establishing this next phase of whole-school improvement in Boston.

D. EP Coach Professional Development

The challenges outlined above suggest that the BPE will need to continue supporting EP schools with a balance of flexibility and guidance, allowing schools to refine the CCL according to their own site-based needs, while at the same time offering them reliable information about which CCL variations have proven successful and in what settings. And these efforts to support schools must be coupled with a similarly balanced approach to support coaches. Because, given the complexities of the CCL approach, now more than ever, coaches need a broad base of knowledge and skill in order to guide further adaptation and implementation of the CCL.

Piloting the CCL in the EP schools posed many new challenges for literacy coaches during the 2001-2002 school year, and clearly demanded more of the coaches' time, energy, and expertise. Many of the literacy coaches who have been in our sample in previous years and who have felt generally well-prepared for their work in schools admitted that this year had been their most difficult. According to the coaches' debriefing sessions, interviews and school-based lab site observations the first year of CCL implementation pushed them to the outermost limits of their abilities.

> *Every minute of my time is so tight that there is no leeway, and that's hard. I feel like that's, that's like the negative of it, and I am just, on the lab site days, it's just mad. I feel absolutely crazy, and I think that is hard to sustain. I really question how many years I could do that for, which is problematic. I think that's something to think about.* Coach A

Like so many aspects of this year's CCL implementation, coaching varied greatly across schools, across lab sites and across cycles. And, as one might expect, some coaches were better prepared to implement the CCL than others. Although almost all of the coaches reported some degree of obstacles in their lab sites (resistant teachers, lack of classroom libraries, etc.), the ways in which coaches characterized and dealt with them varied substantially. In many instances coaches were able to reflect about their own practice enough so that they could adapt their coaching strategies to suit even the most difficult of lab site settings. But this was not always the case. While any number of factors may have contributed to these differences in capacity, many of the coaches who had been exposed to the work of Lucy Calkins and Teachers' College in New York expressed a significant comfort level with the new coaching model, while others who had little knowledge of that work were more hesitant about using the CCL approach and about how to vary its implementation to suit their schools' needs.

Coaches were also differentially effective, meaning that while some of their lab sites went well, others did not. Though coaches could not always articulate precisely why this was the case, most coaches said that a lab site's idiosyncracies (the dynamic of the group, the teachers' existing knowledge of Readers' and Writer's workshop, the level of organization in the host classroom) influenced their ability to coach successfully. In fact, several coaches expressed concern about their inability to deal with resistant teachers, fearing that this would significantly hinder their lab site work. While many coaches were able to work in a range of lab site settings and meet a variety of teachers' learning needs, some coaches lamented that they did not have a larger repertoire of skills with which to tackle these issues.

Which leads us to our final observation about the varied implementation of coaching. In order to get better at doing this work, coaches need professional development that addresses their specific learning needs and acknowledges the wide range of conditions in which they work. Coaches reported that they need a forum in which to share 'best CCL practices' with their colleagues as well as a mechanism for getting feedback about their own professional growth. Even coaches who considered themselves familiar with the CCL approach said that they would have benefitted from additional exposure to the collaborative coaching model and a better sense of the BPE's expectations regarding its implementation. Many also noted that while the Friday debriefing sessions could have served this purpose, they frequently did not.

Our findings suggest that the introduction of the CCL highlighted a new set of coach professional development needs. Though coaches maintain that a deep knowledge of literacy instruction is still an essential part of effective coaching, many note that the CCL requires an array of coaching skills that extends far beyond basic content knowledge of Reader's and Writer's Workshop. The CCL required literacy coaches to expand their work into areas more traditionally left to change coaches such as group facilitation, group decision-making and group capacity building. Literacy coaches' work with principals also intensified as they became more directly involved in determining the scheduling and coverage issues related to the CCL. While some of the literacy coaches reported having only minimal concern regarding this shift in their work, others reported having difficulty carrying out these added responsibilities.

The following are some of the new demands placed on coaches during the first year of CCL implementation:

Scheduling and Logistics - The late notification of principals and teachers regarding the CCL made it difficult for coaches to initiate their work during the first cycle. When schools planned their schedules and professional development for the 2001-2002 school year, only a few knew that BPE had plans to pilot a new coaching model. It was not until late in August 2001 that EP principals were officially notified about the CCL, at which point there was some initial confusion among principals, (and later on, among teachers) about what the CCL should look like and why the EP schools were required to use it in the first place. When literacy coaches arrived in schools in the fall they were faced with the task of having to learn, introduce, and implement the CCL approach all at once.

Many coaches reported that they spent much of the fall undoing the school's planning from the previous spring in order to accommodate the CCL cycles. Most of this re-planning fell to the principal and the literacy coach. In some cases, key staff people (such as literacy coordinators, Vice Principals and Directors of Instruction) and/or the change coach also became involved in revising the school's professional development plan. Literacy coaches reported being overwhelmed by the logistical issues associated with implementing the CCL particularly in schools with insufficient common planning time and limited resources to provide for coverage during lab sites.

Demonstration and Analysis - Though giving demonstration lessons and analyzing teacher practice has always been a part of coach work, the CCL required coaches to operate in a kind of fish-bowl setting that put additional pressure on their pedagogical performance. Given teachers' unfamiliarity with CCL and in some cases with Readers' and Writers' Workshop, a great deal of the lab site's success depended on the coaches' ability to make a consistently good impression with administrators, teachers and students. The implementation of a new coaching model would inevitably result in additional pressure on its practitioners, and many coaches struggled with this, particularly during the first cycle.

The CCL model, as it was originally conceived by the BPE, called for coaches to do the first few lab site demonstrations themselves, and then, over the course of the six-week cycle, gradually release this responsibility to the host teacher and other willing participants. But some coaches co-taught demonstration lessons with the host teacher so that the responsibility of presenting in front of the group did not fall solely to one individual. Others left the responsibility of demonstrating almost entirely up to the host teacher. In some lab sites, where teachers were either unwilling or unready to demonstrate, the coach would lead all of the lessons throughout the entire cycle. Coaches expressed uncertainty about when to employ these different strategies, but often noted that if the quality of the demonstration lesson was consistently weak, so too was the lab site.

Facilitation - Coaches tried to encourage full-participation and solicit constructive criticism during the debriefing sessions, but as noted in the "Challenges" section above, they were not always successful in doing so. For many of the coaches, facilitating debriefing discussions proved to be a problematic departure from their previous coaching work.

Teacher Resistance - As with any coaching model, some coaches implementing the CCL met with some teacher resistance. In the past, coaches dealt with resistant teachers individually, and in most cases, worked only with those teachers who wanted coach support. But, the CCL changed that. Coaches note a marked difference between working with resistant teachers individually and working with them en masse when they had been coaxed into the lab site. In the coming year, coaches will need to learn how to work with resistant teachers in both the lab site group context and in one-on-one follow-up sessions.

Coaches reported that they frequently had to enlist the help of the principal in order to better engage resistant teachers. Though many principals did respond to coaches' cries for help (by removing certain teachers from the lab site, by being present during the debriefing conversations, etc.), sometimes even the principal's intervention was not enough to convince certain teachers of the value and importance of the lab site work.

Given these demands and the multitude of other challenges that coaches faced in implementing the CCL in its first year of implementation, we now examine the kind of professional development that coaches received this year and the kind of professional development that they might need in subsequent years of CCL implementation.

It was difficult for the BPE or even for the coaches to know what kind of professional development they would need during the first year of CCL. Therefore, it seemed sensible for the BPE to design the coaches' professional development in a format that would enable coaches to share their work with one another and provide feedback to the BPE at the same time. To that end, coach professional development began each week with a debriefing session that was intended to give coaches an opportunity to speak about their successes and challenges in moving the work forward. This was followed by inquiry time, in which coaches would meet separately with their inquiry groups to further their own learning around a topic of their choice. [27]

Given the newness of the CCL, the coaches' professional development was aptly designed. But despite its intended flexibility, the plan often proved difficult to implement. While many coaches reported that the informal conversations they had during the debriefing sessions were valuable and pertinent to their work with schools, others noted a lack of support and feedback from the BPE. Some coaches lamented the fact that the BPE could not always address the questions and concerns that came up during the Friday debriefing sessions, particularly with regard to the acceptability of design variants on the CCL. Many coaches said they left the meetings without a clear sense of resolution or next steps for continuing their work in schools.

The coaches' inquiry groups were similarly designed with flexible guidelines. Once coaches selected their topics and formed small groups, they were given the freedom to determine how their work would proceed. In this way, the inquiry groups were intentionally responsive to coaches' learning needs. But from the data we have on this subject it is difficult to say what contribution these inquiry groups made to the coaches' overall knowledge and skill. Nor is it entirely clear how the coaches' inquiry topics related back to their work in schools.

As these and other challenges presented themselves, the BPE was often able to adapt its approach to coach professional development to better meet the coaches' needs. For example, Education Matters witnessed a significant improvement in the Friday debriefing sessions over the course of the year, due in part to the creation of a more coherent meeting structure in which coaches' professional development needs could be addressed with more immediacy. But because these improvements did not happen swiftly, much of the coaches' professional development time was ultimately spent on procedural issues rather than on instruction.

In thinking ahead to next year, the BPE would be well advised in continuing to provide coaches with a flexible format for professional development in which they have adequate time for debriefing and inquiry. But in addition to that, the BPE may need to consider providing coaches with more expert guidance around some of the issues and challenges that are repeatedly raised during the debriefing sessions. (For example, differentiated literacy training, bilingual issues, group facilitation, modifying literacy strategies for the upper grades, etc.) Though the BPE did host a few guest speakers last year, coaches' indicated that these presentations were not always appropriate for their learning needs; given their existing knowledge of the workshop model and

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[27] To some extent, the design of this year's coach professional development was in response to coaches' feedback about the design and implementation of their professional development from the 2000-2001 school year.

the professional literature associated with it, many coaches felt as though these presentations missed the mark, oversimplifying material in which they were already well-versed Requesting presenters to deal with specific issues that coaches raise during their debriefings may help alleviate this problem in the future.

The BPE may want to pay more attention to the coaches' inquiry group learning as well to determine whether and in what ways this form of professional development met the coaches' varied learning needs. If necessary, the BPE could then work with coaches to develop some broad inquiry themes or questions that would better link with the coaches' school-based work as well as their professional development needs.

Finally, the BPE may wish to more fully embrace the professional development model it created for the EP schools. So many teachers and principals have endorsed the CCL as an "intense, hands-on" form of professional development, why not try using some of the CCL strategies with coaches? While the model need not be transferred to coach professional development in its entirety, there is reason to suggest that coaches would benefit from the opportunity to observe pre-planned, coaching demonstrations. This could be accomplished with videos or coordinated school visits. In some ways this would merely be an extension of the peer coach visits, but by gathering all the coaches together to view and comment on a single coaching vignette, coaches and BPE staff would have a way to share their learning - to collaborate - in ways they have not previously. As the BPE asks schools to embrace the workshop model for teaching and learning, this would seem a natural next step in its own approach to coach professional development.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In all of the respects that matter, CCL was a success in its first year of implementation. Despite its abrupt beginning, principals, teachers and coaches managed to establish the model in their schools to begin a first cycle. Education Matters' analysis leads us to conclude that EP schools accomplished a great deal with CCL in its first year and that the model shows great promise for the improvement of teaching and learning and for the further development of high quality, instructionally focused cultures in the Effective Practice schools. Although our report has already detailed the progress of CCL and its benefits and challenges, we want to present some broad conclusions at this point.

- **The model itself – CCL – is basically sound.** The components may need to be modified – for example the extension of a cycle from six to eight weeks – but the model itself proved robust. The first year of its implementation in 26 schools provided a good test of CCL and considerable insight into how it can be strengthened.

- **Local adaptation of CCL is necessary and can contribute to its strength.** Throughout this report, we stressed the adaptations that schools made to the CCL model in order to make it work in a number of individual contexts. Some adaptations worked well and were continued; others did not and were dropped. As CCL is implemented in the second

year, it is likely that additional adaptations will be needed in order to further strengthen the model in the context of the progress schools made in Year I. The BPE should encourage these kinds of school-based variations.

- **People mattered enormously to the successful implementation of CCL.** First, teachers made it possible for CCL to have a successful first year. CCL, by its design, involved more teachers in the coaching process and required them to practice and learn in the view of their colleagues. This was often difficult for teachers who had worked one-on-one with coaches in the past; it was particularly daunting to those who had resisted or who had not had that opportunity. And yet, our data reveal that teachers, for the most part, accepted the new model of coaching and its demands, tried it out, and concluded that it had a great deal to offer. Some schools, by the end of the year, had more demand for CCL coaching than could be provided. Teachers, by their willingness to take on this new approach to professional development, made clear their commitment to whole-school improvement and improved student achievement.

  Second, and needless to say, CCL would not have moved forward without capable coaches. Coaches took on a more promising but also a more challenging role when they agreed to implement CCL. They worked harder than ever before and confronted a new and more complex set of challenges. But they, like the teachers, demonstrated their commitment to the model and their conviction that the payoff for all of the hard work would be improved instruction and, ultimately, increased student learning.

  Third, principals played a pivotal role in the successful implementation of CCL. No matter how well CCL was designed, and no matter how willing the teachers and talented the coaches, without the principals' skill and commitment there would have been little implementation of this model. Principals contributed substantial time to scheduling, designing and participating in lab sites. Some even took the risk of demonstrating a workshop strategy in front of their teachers. They supported the coaches while they supported the district's emphasis on making Readers' and Writers' Workshop a priority. Principals worked as part of a team with teachers, coaches, and the BPE to make the first year of CCL successful. The importance of all of these people should not go unremarked.

- **The BPE should be commended for taking the next steps that led to CCL and for relying on feedback from the coaches, principals, and teachers to make changes in its design for the coming year.** The longer cycles and the additional coaching for larger schools reflects the BPE's responsiveness to the schools' feedback. The changes also indicate the strong acceptance of CCL by the EP schools. If it were not well-regarded, surely no one would be asking for longer cycles and more of them.

In light of these conclusions, we next turn to several issues for the BPE to consider in collaboration with its coaches, the EP principals and the teachers who worked hard to insure

CCL's success. We raise these issues in the context of knowing that the BPE plans to work with the EP schools for another four years and knowing that the BPE will want to insure a growing number of increasingly sophisticated exemplars, like the one detailed in this report..

- It might be worthwhile for the BPE, in collaboration with coaches, principals, and, perhaps outside experts, to develop and benchmark a set of standards connected to CCL implementation. Such standards would describe the level of implementation the EP schools will be expected to have reached at the end of five years. They might include a rubric for high quality courses of study and debriefs, for example. The standards might speak to CCL as a whole and to its component parts. If such standards were developed, then BPE might be able to develop a strategic plan that would help schools meet the standard given their current levels of implementation.

- Year I saw the implementation of the structures and processes associated with CCL. Teachers experienced the risks and benefits of learning collaboratively and determined, for the most part, that the risks were worth the benefits. We heard scarcely a word about teachers wanting to opt out of CCL. But, Year I only began the process of deepening teachers' knowledge and skill with the workshop strategies. With the structures and processes in place, it is time to consider what might have to be done with the model to insure that it is deepening teachers' knowledge and skill.

- Principals experimented with a number of different approaches to assigning teachers to lab sites and many of them had merit. It might be worthwhile to compile the variations in order to determine which ones worked under which circumstances. And, it might also be worthwhile for the BPE to consider factors that made some lab sites more or less successful than others. For example, teachers experienced in using the workshop strategies who found themselves in lab sites with teachers more novice than themselves might have valued the lab sites. But, they also realized that such lab sites did not meet their own learning needs. Might it be important to pilot test some homogeneously grouped lab sites where the criteria for participation have to do with expertise in workshop teaching? Might this be a way to better link CCL with teachers' need for differentiated professional development?

- The data strongly suggest that principal participation in the lab sites, in most cases, makes a great difference to their success. How can the BPE and the EP principals help their colleagues who had difficulty finding the time to participate in lab sites? This is especially important for schools that did not have well-functioning lab sites and in which the principals were not participants. How might the EPprincipals draw on one another's knowledge to enable more principal participation?

- With respect to new principals, might it be useful to allocate CCL cycles so that new principals do not have lab sites during the first cycle? Brand new principals might not be able to attend first cycle lab sites given how much they need to learn about the operations

and management sides of their new roles. Even experienced principals who find themselves in new settings might need the length of a cycle to get to know their teachers before engaging in lab site work.

- Principals and coaches, for the most part, chose the lab sites and identified their courses of study, at least in broad terms during the first year of implementation. But, the CCL model is designed to be a part of whole-school improvement, written into the WSIP, perhaps, and attended to by the ILT as well as the principal and coaches. We think it might be helpful to provide explicit guidance to ILTs about how to use their student assessment data, for example, in conjunction with their knowledge of their teacher population – the number of new teachers in the building, for example – in order to develop well-comprised and instructionally focused lab sites. In light of the implementation of additional cycles in some schools in the 2002-2003 school year, and in recognition of the growing role of math coaching in the schools, it might be useful to help principals and coaches create time for literacy, math, and change coaches, along with the schools' teacher leaders, to plan and coordinate their work.

- Implementing CCL is challenging for coaches even when it is exhilarating. But, when coaches face day after day of resistant teachers, they can be worn down by the strain of the role. Given that some teachers will likely continue to resist implementing the workshop model and/or working in a lab site setting, we think it is incumbent upon the BPE to consider new organizational approaches to supporting coaches who struggle in these settings.

- Education Matters has repeatedly recommended that the BPE figure out how to provide differentiated professional development for its coaches. Like teachers, they do not all need to learn the same thing at the same time and at the same level. We know that the BPE has struggled with developing high quality professional development and we think that now, even more than before, it is essential to get this right. To the extent that CCL is successful and more and more teachers become skillful in implementing Readers' and Writers' Workshop, coaches will need to provide them with even higher quality coaching than at the present time. How will coaches learn to be more expert with these strategies? Their current professional development is not designed to help them become better workshop teachers. So, the question remains: What do coaches need to learn to coach teachers in workshop strategies that coaches may have never used? How necessary is it, in other words, to have had first-hand experience with high level workshop teaching in order to coach teachers in those strategies?

- In our June 2001 internal report on coaching to the BPE, we noted that coaches could identify areas in which they were more and less skilled with respected to workshop components such as guided reading or conferencing. This finding has implications for coach professional development, as indicated above. It also has implications for the deployment of coaches. Would it be worthwhile for the BPE and the schools to figure out how they might take advantage of coaches' particular expertise if not in the 2002-

2003 school year then in subsequent years. Might it be possible to allocate coaches to schools on the basis of the schools' identified needs and not on the basis of days of coaching? As teachers become more skillful, and as whole-school improvement becomes more complex, we think it would serve the BPE, the coaches, and the schools well to consider alternative coach allocation strategies.

- It may be time to consider what other aspects of the Essentials might need to be supported differently than in the past if Boston's Whole-School Improvement agenda is to become sustainable at the school level. It took the BPE several years to determine how to develop ILT and LASW facilitators who would not be dependent on an external coach. That work was challenging and many EP schools still do not have ILTs or LASW groups that can function adequately over the course of the school year without a coach. Given that finding, it might be useful for the BPE to involve teachers, principals and coaches in some brainstorming sessions designed to elaborate the expected in-house instructional leadership requirements for sustaining the instructionally focused work that is being developed through CCL and implementation of the entire set of Essentials. For example, how might coaching be organized when there are no longer mandatory cycles? What kinds of teacher leader roles will the schools need at that time? What kinds of preparation might such individuals need? How could it be provided? It might be useful now to assess such future needs and develop plans with which to address them.

- Finally, as we have suggested throughout this report and its conclusions, the BPE needs enhance its own capacity to work collaboratively with coaches, principals and teachers. Much of the CCL's continued success depends upon the learning of the people who are in the classrooms and schools doing the lab site work. The BPE needs to continue to pay attention to feedback from the EP schools during the coming years. And, it neds to learn how to respond to the feedback by trying out new ideas with the schools and coaches rather than presenting them with full-formed "next steps." The EP principals, teachers and coaches are willing to take on the hard work of improving teaching and learning. The BPE need not fear that the work will not progress if it is developed more collaboratively. If anything, this collaboration should enhance and accelerate the work.

Appendix A

Collaborative Teaching and Learning in Effective Practice Schools

Collaborative Coaching & Learning (CCL)

in Effective Practice Schools

Professional development is most effective when teachers learn and share best practices together. The aim of Collaborative Coaching and Learning (CCL) is just that — to reduce isolation and to encourage a culture in which teachers visit each other's classrooms to observe, participate in, and share best practices. The CCL model will provide strong support to Effective Practice (EP) schools as staff deepen their knowledge and use of Readers' Workshop and Writers' Workshop — two of the superintendent's instructional priorities for SY2001-2002.

CCL provides ongoing, intensive professional development — expert training, classroom demonstration, and feedback — for teachers on Readers' Workshop and Writers' Workshop and helps them to become reflective practitioners. CCL is the central component of an EP school's Professional Development Plan and comprises the following:

- demonstration in the host classroom
- reading of professional literature
- engagement with colleagues in inquiry groups
- use of observation, practice, and reflection to improve instruction

The CCL is aligned with the BPS coaching model and contains the same four elements: theory, classroom practice, feedback, and reflection and inquiry.

Effective Practice Schools 2001-2002

Brighton High School
Burke High School
Carter Center
Condon Elementary School
Curley Elementary School
Early Education Center-East Boston
East Boston High School
Edison Middle School
Everett Elementary School
Garfield Elementary School
Guild Elementary School
Hernandez K-8 School
Lyon K-8 School
Mann School for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing
Manning Elementary School
Marshall Elementary School
Mason Elementary School
Murphy Elementary School
O'Hearn Elementary School
Otis Elementary School
Quincy Elementary School
Snowden Int'l School
Timilty Middle School
Tobin K-8 School
Trotter Elementary School
Warren-Prescott Elementary School

Collaborative Coaching & Learning (CCL)

Change Coach

Building Capacity through Teacher Leadership

As support for the Essentials of Whole-School Improvement moves from implementation to institutionalization, developing school-based teacher leadership is key. Schools need access to expertise to help them accomplish this goal. They also need a principal-headmaster who is an active member of the ILT and supports teachers and other staff as they assume leadership roles. Collaborative Coaching and Learning (CCL) will be used in Effective Practice schools by both content and change coaches to build teacher leadership to deepen and sustain instructional improvement.

For SY2001-2002, change coaches will focus on three areas of teacher leadership: ILT development, ILT facilitation, and Looking at Student Work (LASW) facilitation.

Focus: ILT Development

The change coach will support ILT development in the following ways:

- Identify resources — direct training, suggested workshops or readings, retreats — to help the ILT improve both as an ILT and as individual instructional leaders.
- Help the ILT — using the ILT Development Rubric — assess its level of development and use the results to identify the need for further training in facilitation and data management.
- Make sure other roles such as note taker and timekeeper are established.

Focus: ILT Facilitation

The change coach will support the development of ILT teacher-facilitators in the following ways:

- Help the ILT identify the teachers to be trained as ILT teacher-facilitators and set dates and a schedule for the training.
- Provide ongoing support using observation, practice, and reflection. For each ILT meeting, the coach and ILT teacher-facilitator will engage in a pre-conference, a practice-demonstration, and a debriefing.

The principal-headmaster will make sure the coach and teacher-facilitator have time for the pre-conference and the debriefing.

Focus: LASW Facilitation

The change coach will support LASW facilitation in the following ways:

- Help the ILT identify teacher-facilitators for each LASW group if they are not already in place.
- Provide training and support to LASW teacher-facilitators using observation, practice, and reflection. For each LASW session, the coach and the LASW teacher-facilitator will engage in a pre-conference, a practice/demonstration, and a debrief.
- Support the participation of LASW teacher-facilitators in cross-school LASW networks.

The ILT, principal-headmaster, and change coach will also designate and train at least one ILT member to provide training to new teachers in the Embedded Model for looking at student work, as well as to grade-level teams needing a refresher course.

Collaborative Coaching & Learning (CCL)

Content Coach

Before the CCL Cycle Begins

- Schools will be offered from two to four CCL cycles during the school year, depending on the size of the school. A Readers' Workshop CCL and a Writers' Workshop CCL each require 13 days. A school will have two lab sites operating on the same day during each CCL cycle (with some exceptions).
- The school will be provided with a BPE content coach to facilitate all CCL activities. The coach will help teachers define the course of study they pursue, as well as provide related professional development.
- From four to eight teachers at one grade level or across consecutive grade levels will be identified to participate in the lab site. This group of participating teachers will include at least one specialist during at least one CCL cycle. Teachers will make a commitment to participate in the CCL cycles, and the cycles will be incorporated into the Professional Development Plan created by the ILT.
- The principal-headmaster, ILT, and participating teachers will choose a course of study on elements of Readers' Workshop or Writers' Workshop. The coach will help participants define the agreed-upon course of study and identify the specific strategies or components appropriate for study and practice.
- The principal-headmaster and ILT will organize resources to support the CCL: arrange for coverage, make appropriate adjustments to the schedule; and provide professional literature and other materials.
- For each lab site, a host classroom will serve as a demonstration and practice site for all the teachers involved.
- The ILT will identify one or more CCL teacher-leaders for each lab site. These teacher-leaders will work closely with the coach and will be offered additional professional development. Teacher-leaders will assume some of the responsibilities associated with the CCL. The purpose of this role is to strengthen building-level capacity to continue the CCL work while the coach is off site.
- The Professional Development Plan will contain an outline that describes the CCL work, including the course of study in reading or writing, the grade levels and teachers involved, and the work of the teacher-leader.

Operation of the CCL

- A CCL cycle runs for approximately six weeks. Schools will receive 13 days of coaching during a cycle and one additional "check-back" day after the cycle ends, for a total of 14 days.
- Two lab sites will be in operation during the CCL cycle of six weeks: one in the morning and one in the afternoon.
- The principal-headmaster will be an active participant in one lab site and also take part in the course of study. In addition, he or she will periodically visit the other lab sites in the school and will be responsible for observing and supporting implementation of the Readers' Workshop or Writers' Workshop components when the coach is not on site.
- Each lab site will begin with a pre-conference. The coach will meet with the host teacher, the

teacher-demonstrator, or the whole group for fifteen minutes before the lab site begins.

- Teachers will meet in the lab site with the coach each week for six weeks. The coach will model lessons as the teachers actively observe and take notes. As the lab site progresses, teachers will take turns demonstrating lessons as their peers observe. During the lab site, there will be opportunities for teachers to participate, such as take a running record or confer with a student with the support of the coach.
- Immediately following each lab site session, teachers will meet with the coach to debrief the experience and collaboratively support one another's learning. The debriefing session will be scheduled for at least thirty minutes. At the end of the debriefing session, the schedule for classroom visits will be established and the next teacher-demonstrator will be identified.
- The coach will visit the classrooms of the participating teachers between demonstration days to check in on their progress and support their implementation efforts.
- The participating teachers will set goals for their work in the CCL and write them in a reflective practice log. The teachers will write in their logs each week detailing the evidence of progress related to working on their goals. They will discuss their goals and log with the coach weekly.
- After establishing an agreed-upon professional development schedule, the coach will meet with teachers to provide professional development and to facilitate inquiry groups. This time can be part of the school's 24 hours of professional development.

Follow Up

- Together the coach, classroom teachers, teacher-leader, and principal-headmaster will develop a follow-up plan. This plan will detail the work that teachers will do between coach visits in their classrooms. The teacher-leader will support teachers during the time the coach is not on site.
- The coach will provide two follow-up sessions after the conclusion of the CCL cycle. The coach and teachers will develop a specific plan for continued implementation, demonstration, and professional development.
- The principal-headmaster will be responsible for observing and supporting implementation during the time that the coach is not on site. The principal-headmaster will meet with the coach when he or she returns for the "check-back" visit.

Assessment

- Walkthroughs with the principal-headmaster, designated ILT members, and coach will occur three times throughout the school year to assess the level of implementation of the strategies learned and see evidence of those strategies in practice.

Sharing Effective Practices

- Principal-headmasters and teachers from other schools may sign up to visit a lab site in operation related to an area of Readers' Workshop or Writers' Workshop. In this way, EP schools will serve as a laboratory for other BPS schools on this model of coaching and collaborative adult learning, as well as on effective literacy practices related to Readers' Workshop and Writers' Workshop.

Collaborative Coaching & Learning (CCL)

Glossary

- **Course of study**

  For each cycle, teachers focus on an area of Readers' Workshop or Writers' Workshop; the course of study includes an inquiry group and lab site.

- **Inquiry Group**

  Teachers learn the theory behind the course of study, through group readings and discussions.

- **Lab Site**

  The lab site consist of three parts: pre-briefing, demonstration-observation, and debriefing.
  Pre-briefing: Teachers meet with the coach just prior to the lab-site session.
  Demonstration-observation: Teachers observe the coach or other colleagues during the lab site; later in the cycle, they practice skills learned in the lab site by teaching some of the students in that host classroom.
  Debriefing: Teachers and the coach meet immediately following the lab site to debrief what they have observed and learned from the lesson.

- **Host Classroom**

  For each lab site, a host classroom serves as a demonstration and practice site for participating teachers.

- **Participating Teachers**

  From four to eight teachers at a grade level or across consecutive grade levels are identified to participate in the lab site. This group includes at least one specialist during at least one cycle.

- **Teacher-Leader**

  A teacher is identified by the ILT to work closely with the coach and receive additional training and support. This teacher-leader sustains the work while the coach is off site. The teacher-leader has the opportunity to participate in additional professional development.

- **Content Coach**

  The school has a BPE content coach to facilitate all CCL activities. The coach helps teachers define the course of study and provides professional development for the course of study.

- **Follow up**

  Teachers set instructional goals for their work within the lab site and discuss these goals with the coach. Between demonstration days, teachers try out strategies learned in the lab site in their own classrooms with the support of the coach.

- **Principal Participation & Classroom Visits**

  The principal is an active participant in one lab site and also takes part in the course of study. In addition, the principal periodically visits the other lab sites in the school and is responsible for observing and supporting implementation of the Readers' Workshop or Writers' Workshop components when the coach is not on site.

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